

Tennyson





To Ernest


From Mr. & Mrs. Gately

March 5th 1918





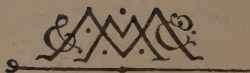
The Globe Edition



POETICAL WORKS

OF

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

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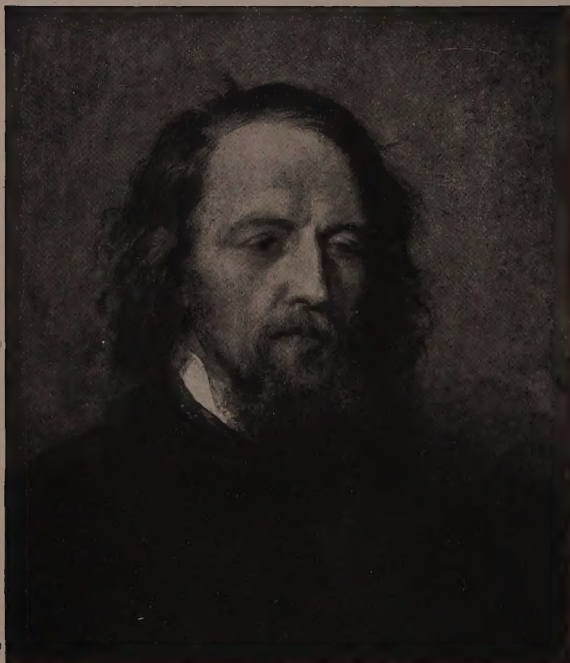
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ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

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POETICAL WORKS OF  
ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

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## TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved—O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,—since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day !  
May children of our children say,  
' She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*' And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*' By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

March 1851.

## JUVENILIA

### CLARIBEL

#### A MELODY

##### I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

##### II

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone :  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone :  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throistle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

### NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be aweary of  
flowing  
Under my eye ?  
When will the wind be aweary of blowing  
Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be aweary of  
fleeting ?

When will the heart be aweary of  
beating ?

And nature die ?

Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;

The stream flows,

The wind blows,

The cloud fleets,

The heart beats,

Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;

All things will change

Thro' eternity.

'Tis the world's winter ;

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago ;

Earth is dry to the centre,

But spring, a new comer,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,

Thro' and thro',

Here and there,

Till the air

And the ground

Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made ;

It will change, but it will not fade.

So let the wind range ;

For even and morn

Ever will be

Thro' eternity.

Nothing was born ;

Nothing will die ;

All things will change.



## ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its  
flowing

Under my eye ;

Warmly and broadly the south winds are  
blowing

Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds are  
fleeting ;

Every heart this May morning in joyance  
is beating

Full merrily ;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow ;

The wind will cease to blow ;

The clouds will cease to fleet ;

The heart will cease to beat ;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

Oh ! vanity !

Death waits at the door.

See ! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd—we must go.

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still ;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh ! misery !

Hark ! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling,

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing ;

Ice with the warm blood mixing ;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell :

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago.

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the shore ;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

## LEONINE ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the  
broad valley dimm'd in the gloaming :  
Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only the  
far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers  
of rose-blowing bushes,

Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble  
and fall.

Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ; the  
grasshopper carolleteth clearly ;

Deeply the wood-dove coos ; shrilly the  
owlet halloos ;

Winds creep ; dewes fall chilly : in her  
first sleep earth breathes stilly :

Over the pools in the burn water-gnats  
murmur and mourn.

Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmer-  
ing water outfloweth :

Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to  
the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayed between  
the two peaks ; but the Naiad

Throbbing in mild unrest holds him  
beneath in her breast.

The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-  
perus all things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me  
my love, Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even ; she  
cometh not morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my  
sweet Rosalind ?

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O GOD ! my God ! have mercy now.

I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou

Didst die for me, for such as *me*,  
 Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
 And that my sin was as a thorn  
 Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
 Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,  
 In this extremest misery  
 Of ignorance, I should require  
 A sign ! and if a bolt of fire  
 Would rive the slumbrous summer noon  
 While I do pray to Thee alone,  
 Think my belief would stronger grow !  
 Is not my human pride brought low ?  
 The boastings of my spirit still ?  
 The joy I had in my freewill  
 All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown ?  
 And what is left to me, but Thou,  
 And faith in Thee ? Men pass me by ;  
 Christians with happy countenances—  
 And children all seem full of Thee !  
 And women smile with saint-like glances  
 Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd  
 Above Thee, on that happy morn  
 When angels spake to men aloud,  
 And Thou and peace to earth were born.  
 Goodwill to me as well as all—  
 I one of them : my brothers they :  
 Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
 And confidence, day after day ;  
 And trust and hope till things should cease,  
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith !  
 To hold a common scorn of death !  
 And at a burial to hear  
 The creaking cords which wound and eat  
 Into my human heart, whene'er  
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,  
 With hopeful grief, were passing sweet !

Thrice happy state again to be  
 The trustful infant on the knee !  
 Who lets his rosy fingers play  
 About his mother's neck, and knows  
 Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
 They comfort him by night and day ;  
 They light his little life away ;  
 He hath no thought of coming woes ;  
 He hath no care of life or death ;  
 Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
 Because the Spirit of happiness

And perfect rest so inward is ;  
 And loveth so his innocent heart,  
 Her temple and her place of birth,  
 Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
 Life of the fountain there, beneath  
 Its salient springs, and far apart,  
 Hating to wander out on earth,  
 Or breathe into the hollow air,  
 Whose chillness would make visible  
 Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
 Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
 Fulfils him with beatitude.  
 Oh ! sure it is a special care  
 Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
 To arm in proof, and guard about  
 With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
 Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were  
 As thine, my mother, when with brows  
 Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
 In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
 For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
 For me unworthy !—and beheld  
 Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
 The beauty and repose of faith,  
 And the clear spirit shining thro' .  
 Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry  
 From roots which strike so deep ? why  
 dare

Paths in the desert ? Could not I  
 Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,  
 To the earth—until the ice would melt  
 Here, and I feel as thou hast felt ?  
 What Devil had the heart to scathe  
 Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush the  
 dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
 Was deep, my mother, in the clay ?  
 Myself ? Is it thus ? Myself ? Had I  
 So little love for thee ? But why  
 Prevail'd not thy pure prayers ? Why  
 pray

To one who heeds not, who can save  
 But will not ? Great in faith, and strong  
 Against the grief of circumstance  
 Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
 Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
 Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
 Unpiloted i' the echoing dance

Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
 Unto the death, not sunk ! I know  
 At matins and at evensong,  
 That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
 In deep and daily prayers would'st strive  
 To reconcile me with thy God.  
 Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
 At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—  
 'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
 My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'  
 Would'st tell me I must brook the rod  
 And chastisement of human pride ;  
 That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
 Betwixt me and the light of God !  
 That hitherto I had defied  
 And had rejected God—that grace  
 Would drop from his o'er-brimming love,  
 As manna on my wilderness,  
 If I would pray—that God would move  
 And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,  
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
 Would issue tears of penitence  
 Which would keep green hope's life.  
 Alas !

I think that pride hath now no place  
 Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
 Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then ? •Why not yet  
 Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
 Hath moor'd and rested ? Ask the sea  
 At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
 After a tempest, rib and fret  
 The broad-imbed beach, why he  
 Slumbers not like a mountain tarn ?  
 Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
 And ripples of an inland mere ?  
 Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
 Draw down into his vexed pools  
 All that blue heaven which hues and paves  
 The other ? I am too forlorn,  
 Too shaken : my own weakness fools  
 My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
 Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,  
 The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
 When I went forth in quest of truth,  
 'It is man's privilege to doubt,

If so be that from doubt at length,  
 Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,  
 An image with profulgent brows,  
 And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
 Of running fires and fluid range  
 Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
 This excellence and solid form  
 Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
 Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
 The horned valleys all about,  
 And hollows of the fringed hills  
 In summer heats, with placid lows  
 Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
 About his hoof. And in the flocks  
 The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
 And raceth freely with his fere,  
 And answers to his mother's calls  
 From the flower'd furrow. In a time,  
 Of which he wots not, run short pains  
 Thro' his warm heart ; and then, from  
 whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
 A shadow ; and his native slope,  
 Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
 Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
 And something in the darkness draws  
 His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
 Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
 As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
 Living, but that he shall live on ?  
 Shall we not look into the laws  
 Of life and death, and things that seem,  
 And things that be, and analyse  
 Our double nature, and compare  
 All creeds till we have found the one,  
 If one there be ?' Ay me ! I fear  
 All may not doubt, but everywhere  
 Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,  
 Whom call I Idol ? Let Thy dove  
 Shadow me over, and my sins  
 Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
 Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
 Somewhat before the heavy clod  
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life ! O weary death !  
 O spirit and heart made desolate !  
 O damned vacillating state !

## THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;  
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights  
flee

About his shadowy sides : above him swell  
Huge sponges of millennial growth and  
height ;

And far away into the sickly light,  
From many a wondrous grot and secret  
cell

Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering  
green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
Battening upon huge seaworms in, his  
sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;  
Then once by man and angels to be seen,  
In roaring he shall rise and on the sur-  
face die.

## SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, 'We are free.'

The streams through many a liliated row  
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, 'We are free.'

## LILIAN

## I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
When I ask her if she love me,  
Claps her tiny hands above me,  
Laughing all she can ;  
She'll not tell me if she love me,  
Cruel little Lilian.

## II

When my passion seeks  
Pleasance in love-sighs,  
She, looking thro' and thro' me  
Thoroughly to undo me,  
Smiling, never speaks :  
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
From beneath her gathered wimple  
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
Till the lightning laughs dimple  
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;  
Then away she flies.

## III

Prythee weep, May Lilian !  
Gaiety without eclipse  
Wearieth me, May Lilian :  
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
When from crimson-threaded lips  
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :  
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL

## I

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,  
but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-  
lucent fane  
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her  
head ;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did  
reign  
The summer calm of golden charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowli-  
head.



## II

The intuitive decision of a bright  
 And thorough-edged intellect to part  
 Error from crime ; a prudence to  
 withhold ;  
 The laws of marriage character'd in  
 gold  
 Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;  
 A love still burning upward, giving light  
 To read those laws ; an accent very low  
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
 Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
 Right to the heart and brain, tho' undes-  
 cried,  
 Winning its way with extreme gentle-  
 ness  
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;  
 A courage to endure and to obey ;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect  
 wife.

## III

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
 Till in its onward current it absorbs  
 With swifter movement and in purer  
 light  
 The vexed eddies of its wayward  
 brother :  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
 Clothing the stem, which else had  
 fallen quite  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and am-  
 brosial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each  
 other—  
 Shadow forth thee :—the world hath  
 not another  
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types of  
 thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA

'Mariana in the moated grange.'  
*Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

Upon the middle of the night,  
 Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
 The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
 From the dark fen the oxen's low  
 Came to her : without hope of change,  
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed  
 morn  
 About the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, 'The day is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall  
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
 And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, 'The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot  
 shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour  
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower.  
 Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,  
 He will not come,' she said ;  
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,  
 Oh God, that I were dead !'

## TO —

I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyfultorn,  
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
 The knots that tangle human creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :  
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords  
 Can do away that ancient lie ;  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
 Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
 Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
 Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penue.

## MADELINE

I

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,  
 No tranced summer calm is thine,  
 Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of fitting change.

## II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
 Revelings deep and clear are thine  
 Of wealthy smiles: but who may know  
 Whether smile or frown be fleetest?  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
     Who may know?  
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,  
     Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
     From one another,  
     Each to each is dearest brother;  
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
     Momently shot into each other.  
     All the mystery is thine;  
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
     Ever varying Madeline.

## III

A subtle, sudden flame,  
 By veering passion fann'd,  
     About thee breaks and dances:  
 When I would kiss thy hand,  
 The flush of anger'd shame  
     O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown:  
 But when I turn away,  
 Thou, willing me to stay,  
     Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest;  
     But, looking fixedly the while,  
 All my bounding heart entanglest  
     In a golden-netted smile;  
 Then in madness and in bliss,  
 If my lips should dare to kiss  
 Thy taper fingers amorously,  
 Again thou blushest angerly;  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG—THE OWL

## I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,  
 And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,  
 And the whirring sail goes round,  
 And the whirring sail goes round;  
     Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

## II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
 And the cock hath sung beneath the  
     thatch  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
     Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG

## TO THE SAME

## I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
 Which upon the dark afloat,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 So took echo with delight;  
     That her voice untuneful grown,  
     Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;  
 But I cannot mimick it;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
     With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew  
     free  
 In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
     The forward-flowing tide of time;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,

By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
High-walled gardens green and old ;  
True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue :  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,  
And broider'd sofas on each side :  
In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.  
A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the  
dome  
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
From the green rivage many a fall  
Of diamond rillels musical,  
Thro' little crystal arches low  
Down from the central fountain's flow  
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odour in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
Not he : but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged  
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :  
A sudden splendour from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—  
 A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
 Full of the city's stilly sound,  
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
 The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
 Graven with emblems of the time,  
 In honour of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
 From the long alley's latticed shade  
 Emerged, I came upon the great  
 Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
 Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
 Flung inward over spangled floors,  
 Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
 Ran up with golden balustrade,  
 After the fashion of the time,  
 And humour of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
 As with the quintessence of flame,  
 A million tapers flaring bright  
 From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
 The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
 Upon the mooned domes aloof  
 In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
 Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
 Of night new-risen, that marvellous time  
 To celebrate the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
 Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
 Tressed with redolent ebony,  
 In many a dark delicious curl,  
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;  
 The sweetest lady of the time,  
 Well worthy of the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
 Throne of the massive ore, from which

Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
 Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
 Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him—in his golden prime,  
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

## ODE TO MEMORY

ADDRESSED TO —

I

THOU who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,  
 Visit my low desire!  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II

Come not as thou camest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day; but robed in soften'd  
 light  
 Of orient state.  
 Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,  
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have  
 kiss'd,

When, she, as thou,  
 Stays on her floating lock the lovely freight  
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
 Which in wintertide shall star  
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

III

Whilome thou camest with the morning  
 mist,  
 And with the evening cloud,  
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into my  
 open breast  
 (Those peerless flowers which in the  
 rudest wind  
 Never grow sere,



When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
 Because they are the earliest of the year).  
 Nor was the night thy shroud.

In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
 Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught from  
 thee

The light of thy great presence ; and the  
 cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
 Tho' deep not fathomless,  
 Was cloven with the million stars which  
 tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
 Small thought was there of life's distress ;  
 For sure she deem'd no mist of earth  
 could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
 beautiful :

Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
 Listening the lordly music flowing from  
 The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
 eyes !

Thou comest not with shows of flaunting  
 vines

Unto mine inner eye,  
 Divinest Memory !

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
 Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall  
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :  
 Come from the woods that belt the gray  
 hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four  
 That stand beside my father's door,  
 And chiefly from the brook that loves  
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
 Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,  
 The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,  
 O ! hither lead thy feet !

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled  
 folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,  
 When the first matin-song hath waken'd  
 loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
 What time the amber morn  
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
 cloud.

## V

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
 To the young spirit present

When first she is wed ;  
 And like a bride of old

In triumph led,  
 With music and sweet showers  
 Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
 Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
 In setting round thy first experiment  
 With royal frame-work of wrought  
 gold ;

Needs must thou dearly love thy first  
 essay,

And foremost in thy various gallery  
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
 Upon the storied walls ;

For the discovery  
 And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
 Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
 With thee unto the love thou bearest  
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
 On the prime labour of thine early days :  
 No matter what the sketch might be ;  
 Whether the high field on the bushless  
 Pike,

Or even a sand-built ridge  
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enor-  
 mous marsh,

Where from the frequent bridge,  
 Like emblems of infinity,  
 The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;  
 Or a garden bower'd close

With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
 Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,  
 Or opening upon level plots  
 Of crowned lilies, standing near  
 Purple-spiked lavender :  
 Whither in after life retired  
 From brawling storms,  
 From weary wind,  
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
 We may hold converse with all forms

Of the many-sided mind,  
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,  
 Were how much better than to own  
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !

O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG

### I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :  
 To himself he talks ;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob and  
 sigh

In the walks ;

Earthward he boweth the heavy  
 stalks

Of the mouldering flowers :

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
 Over its grave ! the earth so chilly ;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

### II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
 As a sick man's room when he taketh  
 repose

An hour before death ;

My very heart faints and my whole soul  
 grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting  
 leaves,

And the breath  
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
 And the year's last rose.  
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
 Over its grave ! the earth so chilly ;  
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## A CHARACTER

WITH a half-glance upon the sky  
 At night he said, 'The wanderings  
 Of this most intricate Universe  
 Teach me the nothingness of things.'  
 Yet could not all creation pierce  
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull  
 Saw no divinity in grass,  
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;  
 Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
 He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,  
 And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods  
 More purely, when they wish to charm  
 Pallas and Juno sitting by :  
 And with a sweeping of the arm,  
 And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
 Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
 He canvass'd human mysteries,  
 And trod on silk, as if the winds  
 Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
 And stood aloof from other minds  
 In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
 Himself unto himself he sold :  
 Upon himself himself did feed :  
 Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
 And other than his form of creed,  
 With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

## THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
 With golden stars above ;  
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn  
 of scorn,  
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good  
and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he  
threaded  
The secretest walks of fame :  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were  
headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver  
tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which  
bore  
Them earthward till they lit ;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field  
flower,  
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth  
anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance,  
grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breath-  
ing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with  
beams,  
Tho' one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the  
world  
Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning  
eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in  
flame  
WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man.  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No  
sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his*  
word  
She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND

### I

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit :  
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river ;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

### II

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers 'would faint at your cruel  
cheer.

In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird  
chants.

It would fall to the ground if you came  
in.

In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder ;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple mountain  
Which stands in the distance yonder :

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from Heaven  
above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;  
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and  
full,

You never would hear it ; your ears are  
so dull ;

So keep where you are : you are foul with  
sin ;

It would shrink to the earth if you came  
in.

### THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
Betwixt the green brink and the running  
foam,

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
prest

To little harps of gold ; and while they  
mused

Whispering to each other half in fear,  
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle  
sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
away ? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green field,  
and the happy blossoming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain  
calls :

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
From wandering over the lea :  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-hill  
swells

High over the full-toned sea :  
O hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me :

Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;  
Here it is only the mew that wails ;

We will sing to you all the day :  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales,  
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on the  
land

Over the islands free ;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the  
sand ;

Hither, come hither and see ;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning  
wave,

And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,  
And sweet shall your welcome be :  
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we :

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
sweet words :

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee :  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden  
chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

Who can light on as happy a shore  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?

Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner,  
mariner, fly no more.

### THE DESERTED HOUSE

#### I

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,

Leaving door and windows wide :  
Careless tenants they !

## II

All within is dark as night :  
In the windows is no light ;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

## III

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or thro' the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV

Come away : no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V

Come away : for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us !

## THE DYING SWAN

## I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,

Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green and  
still

The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and  
yellow.

## III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear ;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the even-  
ing star.

And the creeping mosses and clambering  
weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
And the wavy swell of the souging  
reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing  
bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that  
throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE

## I

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.



## II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drip sweeter dew than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VII

Wild words wander here and there :  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused :

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was gather-  
ing light

Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
And talking to himself, first met his  
sight :

'You must begone,' said Death, 'these  
walks are mine.'

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
for flight ;

Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is  
thine :

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the  
tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all be-  
neath,

So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;  
The shadow passeth when the tree shall  
fall,

But I shall reign for ever over all.'

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with  
snow,

And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
 We heard the steeds to battle going,  
     Oriana ;  
 Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
     Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
     Oriana,  
 Ere I rode into the fight,  
     Oriana,  
 While blissful tears blinded my sight  
 By star-shine and by moonlight,  
     Oriana,  
 I to thee my troth did plight,  
     Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
     Oriana :  
 She watch'd my crest among them all,  
     Oriana :  
 She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
 When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
     Oriana,  
 Atween me and the castle wall,  
     Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
     Oriana :  
 The false, false arrow went aside,  
     Oriana :  
 The damned arrow glanced aside,  
 And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,  
     Oriana !  
 Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
     Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
     Oriana.  
 Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
     Oriana.  
 Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
 The battle deepen'd in its place,  
     Oriana ;  
 But I was down upon my face,  
     Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
     Oriana !  
 How could I rise and come away,  
     Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?  
 They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
     Oriana—  
 They should have trod me into clay,  
     Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
     Oriana !  
 O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
     Oriana !  
 Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
 And then the tears run down my cheek,  
     Oriana :  
 What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek,  
     Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
     Oriana.  
 I feel the tears of blood arise  
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
     Oriana.  
 Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
     Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
     Oriana !  
 O happy thou that liest low,  
     Oriana !  
 All night the silence seems to flow  
 Beside me in my utter woe,  
     Oriana.  
 A weary, weary way I go,  
     Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
     Oriana,  
 I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
     Oriana.  
 Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
 I dare not die and come to thee,  
     Oriana.  
 I hear the roaring of the sea,  
     Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbour villages  
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas ;

Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard  
 wall ;  
 Two lives bound fast in one with golden  
 ease ;  
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
 church-tower,  
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-  
 somed ;  
 Two children in one hamlet born and  
 bred ;  
 So runs the round of life from hour to  
 hour.

## THE MERMAN

### I

WHO would be  
 A merman bold,  
 Sitting alone,  
 Singing alone  
 Under the sea,  
 With a crown of gold,  
 On a throne ?

### II

I would be a merman bold,  
 I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;  
 I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of  
 power ;  
 But at night I would roam abroad and  
 play  
 With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
 Dressing their hair with the white sea-  
 flower ;  
 And holding them back by their flowing  
 locks  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
 Laughingly, laughingly ;  
 And then we would wander away, away  
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight and  
 high,  
 Chasing each other merrily.

### III

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
 But the wave would make music above  
 us afar—

Low thunder and light in the magic  
 night—

Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
 Call to each other and whoop and cry

All night, merrily, merrily ;

They would pelt me with starry spangles  
 and shells,

Laughing and clapping their hands be-  
 tween,

All night, merrily, merrily :

But I would throw to them back in mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :

Then leaping out upon them unseen

I would kiss them often under the sea,

And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh ! what a happy life were mine

Under the hollow-hung ocean green !

Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;

We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID

### I

WHO would be  
 A mermaid fair,  
 Singing alone,  
 Combing her hair  
 Under the sea,  
 In a golden curl  
 With a comb of pearl,  
 On a throne ?

### II

I would be a mermaid fair ;  
 I would sing to myself the whole of the  
 day ;  
 With a comb of pearl I would comb my  
 hair ;  
 And still as I comb'd I would sing and  
 say,  
 ' Who is it loves me ? who loves not me ?'  
 I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
 would fall

Low adown, low adown,

From under my starry sea-bud crown

Low adown and around,

And I should look like a fountain of gold

Springing alone  
 With a shrill inner sound,  
 Over the throne  
 In the midst of the hall ;  
 Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
 From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
 Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
 Round the hall where I sate, and look  
     in at the gate  
 With his large calm eyes for the love of  
     me.  
 And all the mermen under the sea  
 Would feel their immortality  
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III

But at night I would wander away, away,  
     I would fling on each side my low-  
     flowing locks,  
 And lightly vault from the throne and play  
     With the mermen in and out of the  
     rocks ;  
 We would run to and fro, and hide and  
     seek,  
     On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson  
     shells,  
     Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
 But if any came near I would call, and  
     shriek,  
 And adown the steep like a wave I would  
     leap  
     From the diamond-ledges that jut from  
     the dells ;  
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who  
     would list,  
 Of the bold merry mermen under the  
     sea ;  
 They would sue me, and woo me, and  
     flatter me,  
 In the purple twilights under the sea ;  
 But the king of them all would carry me,  
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
 In the branching jaspers under the sea ;  
 Then all the dry pied things that be  
 In the hueless mosses under the sea  
 Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
 All looking up for the love of me.  
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
 All things that are forked, and horned,  
     and soft

Would lean out from the hollow sphere  
     of the sea,  
 All looking down for the love of me.

## ADELINE

## I

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
     Faintly smiling Adeline,  
     Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
     But beyond expression fair  
     With thy floating flaxen hair ;  
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
     Take the heart from out my breast.  
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

## II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
     Like a lily which the sun  
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
     And a rose-bush leans upon,  
 Thou that faintly smilest still,  
     As a Naiad in a well,  
     Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
     Of a maiden past away,  
 Ere the placid lips be cold ?  
 Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline ?

## III

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?  
     For sure thou art not all alone.  
     Do beating hearts of salient springs  
     Keep measure with thine own ?  
     Hast thou heard the butterflies  
     What they say betwixt their wings ?  
     Or in stillest evenings  
 With what voice the violet woos  
 To his heart the silver dew ?  
     Or when little airs arise,  
     How the merry bluebell rings  
     To the mosses underneath ?  
     Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
     Of the lilies at sunrise ?

Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## V

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn,  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-drooping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

## MARGARET

## I

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
Your melancholy sweet and frail  
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
From the westward-winding flood,  
From the evening-lighted wood,  
From all things outward you have  
won  
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
Like the tender amber round,  
Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II

You love, remaining peacefully,  
To hear the murmur of the strife,  
But enter not the toil of life.  
Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
You are the evening star, always  
Remaining betwixt dark and bright:  
Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
Float by you on the verge of night.

## III

What can it matter, Margaret,  
What songs below the waning stars  
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
Sang looking thro' his prison bars?  
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
Just ere the falling axe did part  
The burning brain from the true heart,  
Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV

A fairy shield your Genius made  
And gave you on your natal day.  
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
Keeps real sorrow far away.  
You move not in such solitudes,  
You are not less divine,  
But more human in your moods,  
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
And less aërially blue,  
But ever trembling thro' the dew  
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## V

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,

Come down, come down, and hear me  
speak :

Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :

The sun is just about to set,

The arching limes are tall and shady,

And faint, rainy lights are seen,

Moving in the leavy beech.

Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,

Where all day long you sit between

Joy and woe, and whisper each.

Or only look across the lawn,

Look out below your bower-eaves,

Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn

Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## ROSALIND

### I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,

My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,

Whose free delight, from any height of  
rapid flight,

Stoops at all game that wing the skies,

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,

My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,

Careless both of wind and weather,

Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,

Up or down the streaming wind?

### II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,

The shadow rushing up the sea,

The lightning flash between the rains,

The sunlight driving down the lea,

The leaping stream, the very wind,

That will not stay, upon his way,

To stoop the cowslip to the plains,

Is not so clear and bold and free

As you, my falcon Rosalind.

You care not for another's pains,

Because you are the soul of joy,

Bright metal all without alloy.

Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,

And flashes off a thousand ways,

Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.

Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,

Keen with triumph, watching still

To pierce me thro' with pointed light ;

But oftentimes they flash and glitter

Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
And your words are seeming-bitter,  
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
From excess of swift delight.

### III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,

My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :

Too long you keep the upper skies ;

Too long you roam and wheel at will ;

But we must hood your random eyes,

That care not whom they kill,

And your cheek, whose brilliant hue

Is so sparkling-fresh to view,

Some red heath-flower in the dew,

Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind

And keep you fast, my Rosalind,

Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,

And clip your wings, and make you love :

When we have lured you from above,

And that delight of frolic flight, by day  
or night,

From North to South,

We'll bind you fast in silken cords,

And kiss away the bitter words

From off your rosy mouth.

## ELEÄNORE

### I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,

Nor first reveal'd themselves to English  
air,

For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward  
brought,

Moulded thy baby thought.

Far off from human neighbourhood,

Thou wert born, on a summer morn,

A mile beneath the cedar-wood.

Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd

With breezes from our oaken glades,

But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
land

Of lavish lights, and floating shades :

And flattering thy childish thought

The oriental fairy brought,

At the moment of thy birth,



From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
 And the hearts of purple hills,  
     And shadow'd coves on a sunny  
     shore,  
     The choicest wealth of all the  
     earth,  
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
     Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
     With whitest honey in fairy gar-  
     dens cull'd—  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
     To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
     On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
     blinded  
     With many a deep-hued bell-like  
     flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
     Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
     And the crag that fronts the Even,  
     All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsoned over an inland mere,  
     Eleänore !

## IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
     How may measured words adore  
     The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
     Eleänore ?  
     The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
     Eleänore ?  
     Every turn and glance of thine,  
     Every lineament divine,  
     Eleänore,

And the steady sunset glow,  
 That stays upon thee? For in thee  
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
 Like two streams of incense free  
     From one censer in one shrine,  
     Thought and motion mingle,  
 Mingle ever. Motions flow  
 To one another, even as tho'  
 They were modulated so  
     To an unheard melody,  
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
     Of richest pauses, evermore  
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
 Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

## V

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;  
     I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
 Daily and hourly, more and more.  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
     Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
 I muse, as in a trance, when'er  
     The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
     So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee for evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore !

## VI

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see  
 Thought folded over thought, smiling  
     asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
 I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light :  
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
 Should slowly round his orb, and slowly  
     grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,  
     And draw itself to what it was  
     before ;  
     So full, so deep, so slow,  
     Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
 Roof'd the world with doubt and  
 fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky ;  
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
 In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
 And luxury of contemplation :  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
 Rolling slide, and lying still  
 Shadow forth the banks at will :  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
 Pressing up against the land,  
 With motions of the outer sea :  
 And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
 And so would languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleānore.

## VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
 unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset and  
 the moon ;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined ;  
 I watch thy grace ; and in its place  
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
 While I muse upon thy face ;  
 And a languid fire creeps  
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon  
 From thy rose-red lips MY name  
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
 With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
 I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
 I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warm-  
 est life.

I die with my delight, before  
 I hear what I would hear from  
 thee ;

Yet tell my name again to me,  
 I *would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleānore.

## KATE

I KNOW her by her angry air,  
 Her bright black eyes, her bright black  
 hair,  
 Her rapid laughs wild and shrill,  
 As laughs of the woodpecker  
 From the bosom of a hill.  
 'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she will :  
 For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
 Clear as the twanging of a harp.  
 Her heart is like a throbbing star.  
 Kate hath a spirit ever strung  
 Like a new bow, and bright and sharp  
 As edges of the scymetar.  
 Whence shall she take a fitting mate ?  
 For Kate no common love will feel ;  
 My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,  
 As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'  
 Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'  
 Kate snaps her fingers at my vows ;  
 Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.  
 I would I were an arm'd knight,  
 Far-famed for well-won enterprise,  
 And wearing on my swarthy brows  
 The garland of new-wreathed emprise :  
 For in a moment I would pierce  
 The blackest files of clanging fight,  
 And strongly strike to left and right,  
 In dreaming of my lady's eyes.  
 Oh ! Kate loves well the bold and  
 fierce ;  
 But none are bold enough for Kate,  
 She cannot find a fitting mate.

## I

MY life is full of weary days,  
 But good things have not kept aloof,  
 Nor wander'd into other ways :  
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink  
 Of that deep grave to which I go :  
 Shake hands once more : I cannot sink  
 So far—far down, but I shall know  
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

## II

When in the darkness over me  
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
 Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,  
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood  
 Grow green beneath the showery gray,  
 And rugged barks begin to bud,  
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with  
 may,  
 Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
 And on my clay her darnel grow ;  
 Come only, when the days are still,  
 And at my headstone whisper low,  
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

## EARLY SONNETS

I  
TO ———

As when with downcast eyes we muse and  
 brood,  
 And ebb into a former life, or seem  
 To lapse far back in some confused dream  
 To states of mystical similitude ;  
 If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
 So that we say, ' All this hath been before,  
 All this hath been, I know not when or  
 where.'  
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon your  
 face,  
 Our thought gave answer each to each, so  
 true—  
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—  
 That tho' I knew not in what time or place,  
 Methought that I had often met with you,  
 And either lived in either's heart and  
 speech.

## II

## TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou  
 wilt be  
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
 To scare church-harpies from the master's  
 feast ;  
 Our dusted velvets have much need of  
 thee :  
 Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd  
 homily ;  
 But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
 To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
 Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-  
 out clerk  
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from  
 a throne  
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the  
 dark  
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and  
 mark.

## III

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and  
 free,  
 Like some broad river rushing down  
 alone,  
 With the selfsame impulse wherewith he  
 was thrown  
 From his loud fount upon the echoing  
 lea :—  
 Which with increasing might doth forward  
 flee  
 By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,  
 and isle,  
 And in the middle of the green salt sea  
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
 Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
 Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
 May into uncongenial spirits flow ;  
 Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
 Floats far away into the Northern seas  
 The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

## IV

## ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right  
arm debased  
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap  
bled  
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced  
For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-erased)  
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents  
led  
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed  
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.  
There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine  
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :  
High things were spoken there, unhanded  
down ;  
Only they saw thee from the secret shrine  
Returning with hot cheek and kindled  
eyes.

## V

## BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts  
of oak,  
Madman !—to chain with chains, and bind  
with bands  
That island queen who sways the floods  
and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,  
When from her wooden walls,—lit by  
sure hands,—  
With thunders, and with lightnings, and  
with smoke,—  
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when El-  
sinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden  
fires  
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him : late he learned humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd  
with briers.

## VI

## POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
down,  
And trampled under by the last and least  
Of men ? The heart of Poland hath not  
ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth  
drown  
The fields, and out of every smouldering  
town  
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-  
creased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
Transgress his ample bound to some new  
crown :—  
Cries to Thee, ' Lord, how long shall  
these things be ?  
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region ? ' Us, O Just and  
Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn  
in three ;  
Us, who stand now, when we should aid  
the right—  
A matter to be wept with tears of blood !

## VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch  
and stand,  
And run thro' every change of sharp and  
flat ;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy  
band,  
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.  
But now they live with Beauty less and  
less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds ;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

## VIII

THE form, the form alone is eloquent !  
 A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
 Than but to dance and sing, be gaily  
     drest,  
 And win all eyes with all 'accomplish-  
     ment :

Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
 My fancy made me for a moment blest  
 To find my heart so near the beauteous  
     breast

That once had power to rob it of content.  
 A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
 The phantom of a wish that once could  
     move,

A ghost of passion that no smiles re-  
     store—

For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot  
     love,

And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand  
     years,

She still would take the praise, and care  
     no more.

## IX

WAN Sculptor, weepest thou to take the  
     cast

Of those dead lineaments that near thee  
     lie ?

O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the  
     past,

In painting some dead friend from memory ?  
 Weep on : beyond his object Love can  
     last :

His object lives : more cause to weep  
     have I :

My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
 No tears of love, but tears that Love can  
     die.

I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
 Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—  
 Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,  
 But breathe it into earth and close it up  
 With secret death for ever, in the pits  
 Which some green Christmas crams with  
     weary bones.

## X

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,  
 What is there in the great sphere of the  
     earth,

And range of evil between death and birth,  
 That I should fear,—if I were loved by  
     thee ?

All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if  
     thou wert mine,

As I have heard that, somewhere in the  
     main,

Fresh-water springs come up through  
     bitter brine.

'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand  
     with thee,

To wait for death—mute—careless of all  
     ills,

Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
 Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into the  
     gorge

Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## XI

## THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was  
     tied,

Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly  
     see ;

Thy sister smiled and said, ' No tears for  
     me !

A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride.'  
 And then, the couple standing side by  
     side,

Love lighted down between them full of  
     glee,

And over his left shoulder laugh'd at  
     thee,

' O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
     bride.'

And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,  
 For while the tender service made thee  
     weep,

I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not  
     hide,

And prest thy hand, and knew the press  
     return'd,

And thought, ' My life is sick of single  
     sleep :

O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
     bride !'

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## AND OTHER POEMS

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

## PART I

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Thro' the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
Skimming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is she known in all the land,  
The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,  
Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
From the river winding clearly,  
Down to tower'd Camelot :  
And by the moon the reaper weary,  
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
Listening, whispers ' 'Tis the fairy  
Lady of Shalott. '

## PART II

THERE she weaves by night and day  
A magic web with colours gay.

She has heard a whisper say,  
A curse is on her if she stay  
To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily,  
And little other care hath she,  
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
That hangs before her all the year,  
Shadows of the world appear.  
There she sees the highway near  
Winding down to Camelot :  
There the river eddy whirls,  
And there the surly village-churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls,  
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two :  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
And music, went to Camelot :  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed ;  
' I am half sick of shadows,' said  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,



That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot :  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra,' by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complain-  
ing,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot ;  
Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot :  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near  
Died the sound of royal cheer ;  
And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
All the knights at Camelot :  
But Lancelot mused a little space ;  
He said, 'She has a lovely face ;  
God in his mercy lend her grace,  
The Lady of Shalott.'

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

WITH one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house thro' all the level shines,  
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
 And silent in its dusty vines :  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
     But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,  
     And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,  
     And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down  
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
 To left and right, and made appear  
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
 Her melancholy eyes divine,  
 The home of woe without a tear.  
     And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,  
     'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'  
     And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
 Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;  
 Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace  
 To help me of my weary load.'  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face.  
     'Is this the form,' she made her  
     moan,  
     'That won his praises night and  
     morn ?'  
 And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake  
 alone,  
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming salt ;  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
 grass,  
 And heard her native breezes pass,

And runlets babbling down the glen.  
 She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
 And murmuring, as at night and  
 morn,  
 She thought, 'Myspirit is here alone,  
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :  
 She felt he was and was not there.  
 She woke : the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
 The river-bed was dusty-white ;  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.  
     She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
     More inward than at night or morn,  
     'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
     Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew  
 Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be  
 true,  
 To what is loveliest upon earth.'  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look at her with slight, and say  
 'But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone for evermore.'  
     'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,  
     'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
     Is this the end to be left alone,  
     To live forgotten, and die forlorn ?'

But sometimes in the falling day  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,  
 'But thou shalt be alone no more.'  
 And flaming downward over all  
 From heat to heat the day decreased,  
 And slowly rounded to the east  
 The one black shadow from the wall.  
     'The day to night,' she made her  
     moan,  
     'The day to night, the night to  
     morn,  
 And day and night I am left alone  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
 There came a sound as of the sea ;

Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
 And lean'd upon the balcony.  
 There all in spaces rosy-bright  
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
 And deepening thro' the silent spheres  
 Heaven over Heaven rose the night.  
 And weeping then she made her moan,  
 'The night comes on that knows not  
 morn,  
 When I shall cease to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

## THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
 'Thou art so full of misery,  
 Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;  
 'Let me not cast in endless shade  
 What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;  
 'To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
 Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil  
 Of his old husk: from head to tail  
 Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;  
 Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
 A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,  
 Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
 And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest  
 Proportion, and, above the rest,  
 Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied;  
 'Self-blinded are you by your pride:  
 Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
 That in a boundless universe  
 Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
 Could find no statelier than his peers  
 In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:  
 'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
 Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:  
 'No compound of this earthly ball  
 Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;  
 'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,  
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense,  
 When thy peculiar difference  
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'  
 But my full heart, that work'd below,  
 Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:  
 'Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
 Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
 Nor any train of reason keep:  
 Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.'

I said, 'The years with change advance:  
 If I make dark my countenance,  
 I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
 Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can make  
 A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know  
 That all about the thorn will blow  
 In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of thought  
 Still moving after truth long sought,  
 Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some time,  
 Sooner or later, will gray prime  
 Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
 Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
 Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,  
 The fuzzy prickle fire the dells,  
 The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent ;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power ?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,  
'Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main ?

'Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

''Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry," men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,  
'To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee ? Art thou so bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground ?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust ;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,  
'From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride !'

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

'As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,  
The springs of-life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

'At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea !' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour ?

'Then comes the check, the change, the  
fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labour little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn, ●  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost  
strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

'And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,  
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

'I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

'But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised  
with stones :

'But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
'Not that the grounds of hope were  
fix'd,

The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

'For I go, weak from suffering here :  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,  
'His face, that two hours since hath died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

'Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek :  
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapours fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,  
'These things are wrapt in doubt and  
    dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

'I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head :  
"Omega ! thou art Lord," they said,  
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

'Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense ?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly :  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name—Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex  
His reason : many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something  
    good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

'Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.



'Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man :

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days :

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth !'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest ;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end ;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

'I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

'Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of  
night ;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot ;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

'For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

'Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he,  
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy  
mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new ?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant ;  
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest :  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :  
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ?'  
I cried.

'A hidden hope,' the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers :  
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong ;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, 'Rejoice ! Rejoice !'

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup—  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss ;  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.

There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
 But more is taken quite away.  
 Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
 That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
 I least should breathe a thought of  
 pain.

Would God renew me from my birth  
 I'd almost live my life again.  
 So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
 And once again to woo thee mine—  
 It seems in after-dinner talk  
 Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
 Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
 Where this old mansion mounted high  
 Looks down upon the village spire :  
 For even here, where I and you  
 Have lived and loved alone so long,  
 Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
 By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
 In firry woodlands making moan ;  
 But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
 I had no motion of my own.  
 For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
 Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
 Still hither thither idly sway'd  
 Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lea'd to hear  
 The milldam rushing down with noise,  
 And see the minnows everywhere  
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
 The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
 Below the range of stepping-stones,  
 Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
 When after roving in the woods  
 ('Twas April then), I came and sat  
 Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
 Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
 And on the slope, an absent fool,  
 I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
 An echo from a measured strain,  
 Beat time to nothing in my head  
 From some odd corner of the brain.  
 It haunted me, the morning long,  
 With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
 The phantom of a silent song,  
 That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
 I watch'd the little circles die ;  
 They past into the level flood,  
 And there a vision caught my eye ;  
 The reflex of a beauteous form,  
 A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
 As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
 Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
 That morning, on the casement-edge  
 A long green box of mignonette,  
 And you were leaning from the ledge :  
 And when I raised my eyes, above  
 They met with two so full and bright—  
 Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,  
 That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
 That I should die an early death :  
 For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
 And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
 My mother thought, What ails the boy ?  
 For I was alter'd, and began  
 To move about the house with joy,  
 And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
 Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
 The sleepy pool above the dam,  
 The pool beneath it never still,  
 The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
 The dark round of the dripping  
 wheel,  
 The very air about the door  
 Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
 When April nights began to blow,  
 And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
 I saw the village lights below ;

I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;  
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits !'  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.

'O that I were beside her now !  
O will she answer if I call ?  
O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the  
blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with  
may,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;  
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one !  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire :  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher ;  
And I was young—too young to wed :  
'Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said :  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please.  
I loved you better for your fears,  
I knew you could not look but well ;  
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,  
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
The doubt my mother would not see ;  
She spoke at large of many things,  
And at the last she spoke of me ;  
And turning look'd upon your face,  
As near this door you sat apart,  
And rose, and, with a silent grace  
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song .  
I gave you, Alice, on the day  
When, arm in arm, we went along,  
A pensive pair, and you were gay  
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
As in the nights of old, to lie  
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
That I would be the jewel  
That trembles in her ear :  
For hid in ringlets day and night,  
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle  
About her dainty dainty waist,  
And her heart would beat against me,  
In sorrow and in rest :  
And I should know if it beat right,  
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,  
And all day long to fall and rise  
Upon her balmy bosom,  
With her laughter or her sighs,  
And I would lie so light, so light,  
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells—  
True love interprets—right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart :

So sing that other song I made,  
 Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
 The day, when in the chestnut shade  
 I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
 Can he pass, and we forget ?  
 Many suns arise and set.  
 Many a chance the years beget.  
 Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
 Love is made a vague regret.  
 Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
 Idle habit links us yet.

What is love ? for we forget :

Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True  
 wife,

Round my true heart thine arms entwine  
 My other dearer life in life,

Look thro' my very soul with thine !

Untouch'd with any shade of years,

May those kind eyes for ever dwell !

They have not shed a many tears,

Dear eyes, since first I knew them  
 well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part

Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,

The still affection of the heart

Became an outward breathing type,

That into stillness past again,

And left a want unknown before ;

Although the loss had brought us pain,

That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,

The woven arms, seem but to be

Weak symbols of the settled bliss,

The comfort, I have found in thee :

But that God bless thee, dear — who  
 wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—

With blessings beyond hope or thought,

With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,

To yon old mill across the wolds ;

For look, the sunset, south and north,

Winds all the vale in rosy folds,

And fires your narrow casement glass,  
 Touching the sullen pool below :  
 On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
 Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !  
 O sun, that from thy noonday height  
 Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
 Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
 Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
 Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
 I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
 Below the city's eastern towers :  
 I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
 I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
 I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth ;  
 I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
 Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his  
 name,  
 From my swift blood that went and came  
 A thousand little shafts of flame  
 Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
 O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
 With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
 He cometh quickly : from below  
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
 Before him, striking on my brow.  
 In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,  
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
 And from beyond the noon a fire  
 Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
 The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce  
 delight,  
 Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
 All naked in a sultry sky,

Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I *will* possess him or will die.

I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

### CENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the  
glen,

Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine  
to pine,

And loiters, slowly drawn. On either  
hand

The lawns and meadow-ledges midway  
down

Hang rich in flowers, and far below them  
roars

The long brook falling thro' the clov'n  
ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.

Behind the valley topmost Gargarus

Stands up and takes the morning: but in  
front

The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal

Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,

The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon

Mournful Cenone, wandering forlorn

Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and round  
her neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.

She, leaning on a fragment twined with  
vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-  
shade

Sloped downward to her seat from the  
upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:

The grasshopper is silent in the grass:

The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are

dead.

The purple flower droops: the golden bee

Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,

My heart is breaking, and my eyes are  
dim,

And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O  
Caves

That house the cold crown'd snake! O  
mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,

Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls

Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,

A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be

That, while I speak of it, a little while

My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,

Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

I waited underneath the dawning hills,

Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy dark,

And dewy dark aloft the mountain pine:

Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,

Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,

white-hooved,

Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:

Far up the solitary morning smote

The streaks of virgin snow. With down-  
dropt eyes

I sat alone: white-breasted like a star

Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard  
skin

Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny  
hair

Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:

And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow  
brightens

When the wind blows the foam, and all  
my heart

Went forth to embrace him coming ere  
he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

He smiled, and opening out his milk-  
white palm



Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd  
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
speech  
Came down upon my heart.

"My own Ænone,  
Beautiful-brow'd Ænone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind  
ingrav'n

'For the most fair,' would seem to award  
it thine,

As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married  
brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added "This was cast upon the  
board,

When all the full-faced presence of the  
Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom  
'twere due:

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the  
cave

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of  
Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnight: one silvery  
cloud

Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower  
they came,

Naked they came to that smooth-swarded  
bower,

And at their feet the crocus brake like  
fire,

Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and  
vine,

This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower thro'  
and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and  
lean'd

Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
Then first I heard the voice of her, to  
whom

Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that  
grows

Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
Rise up for reverence.' She to Paris made  
Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue

Wherewith to embellish state, "from  
many a vale

And river-sunder'd champaign clothed  
with corn,

Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.  
Honour," she said, "and homage, tax  
and toll,

From many an inland town and haven  
large,

Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing  
citadel

In glassy bays among her tallest towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
Still she spake on and still she spake of  
power,

"Which in all action is the end of all;  
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred  
And throned of wisdom—from all neigh-  
bour crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon  
from me,

From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee  
king-born,

A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
Should come most welcome, seeing men,  
in power

Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought  
 of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she  
 stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared  
 limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed  
 spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest  
 eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry  
 cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made  
 reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-  
 control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign  
 power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live by  
 law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Again she said : "I woo thee not with  
 gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to  
 thee,

So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a  
 God's,

To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown  
 will,

Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom."

'Here she ceas'd,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O  
 Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas !" but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Italian Aphrodite beautiful,  
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian  
 wells,  
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her  
 deep hair  
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
 And shoulder : from the violets her light  
 foot  
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded  
 form  
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
 moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise  
 thee

The fairest and most loving wife in  
 Greece,"

She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight  
 for fear :

But when I look'd, Paris had raised his  
 arm,

And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower ;  
 And from that time to this I am alone,  
 And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand  
 times.

Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful  
 tail

Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most  
 loving is she ?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my  
arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot lips  
prest

Close, close to thine in that quick-falling  
dew

Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest  
pines,

My tall dark pines, that plumed the  
craggy ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between  
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
Foster’d the callow eaglet—from beneath  
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the  
dark morn

The panther’s roar came muffled, while  
I sat

Low in the valley. Never, never more  
Shall lone Enone see the morning mist  
Sweep thro’ them; never see them over-  
laid

With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the trem-  
bling stars.

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin’d folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the  
glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with  
her

The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And bred this change; that I might speak  
my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and  
men.

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand  
times,

In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev’n on this hand, and sitting on this  
stone?

Seal’d it with kisses? water’d it with  
tears?

O happy tears, and how unlike to these!  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my  
face?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear my  
weight?

O death, death, death, thou ever-floating  
cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and  
more,

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the in-  
most hills,

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes  
Across me: never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes!

‘O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to  
me

Walking the cold and starless road of  
Death

Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and  
go

Down into Troy, and ere the stars come  
forth

Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.

What this may be I know not, but I  
know

That, wheresoe’er I am by night and  
day,

All earth and air seem only burning  
fire.’

## THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race :

She was the fairest in the face :

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.

They were together, and she fell ;

Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :

She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early and late,

To win his love I lay in wait :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;

I won his love, I brought him home.

The wind is roaring in turret and tree.

And after supper, on a bed,

Upon my lap he laid his head :

O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :

His ruddy cheek upon my breast.

The wind is raging in turret and tree.

I hated him with the hate of hell,

But I loved his beauty passing well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :

I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.

As half-asleep his breath he drew,

Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,

He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,

And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO ———

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,

A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind)

And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if  
Good,

Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are  
three sisters

That doat upon each other, friends to  
man,

Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall  
be

Shut out from Love, and on her threshold  
lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common  
earth

Moulded by God, and temper'd with the  
tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd  
brass

I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or  
shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and  
round,' I said,

'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast  
shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily :  
 'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
 In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
 So royal-rich and wide.'

\* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and  
 South and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there  
 ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,  
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
 That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where the  
 sky  
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one  
 swell

Across the mountain stream'd below  
 In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
 A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
 From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall  
 gaze upon  
 My palace with unblinded eyes,  
 While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
 And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never  
 fail'd,  
 And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
 The light ærial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd  
 and traced,  
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
 From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,  
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
 That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
 Thro' which the livelong day my soul  
 did pass,  
 Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace  
 stood,  
 All various, each a perfect whole  
 From living Nature, fit for every mood  
 And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green  
 and blue,  
 Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter  
 blew  
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of  
 sand,  
 And some one pacing there alone,  
 Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
 Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry  
 waves.  
 You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing  
 caves,  
 Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding  
 low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones  
 and slags,  
 Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the  
 scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,

A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
As fit for every mood of mind,

Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there

Not less than truth design'd.

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx  
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne:  
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one  
hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
Not less than life, design'd.

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
that swung,  
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;  
And with choice paintings of wise men I  
hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and  
mild;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd  
his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and  
stings;  
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or  
bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick man  
declined,  
And trusted any cure.



But over these she trod : and those great  
bells

Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured  
flame

Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion  
were

Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd  
fair

In diverse raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
emerald, blue,

Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon,  
drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong

Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd  
song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful  
mirth,

Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible  
earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : ' All these are  
mine,

And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me.' She—when young night  
divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
— In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands  
and cried,

' I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

' O all things fair to sate my various eyes !  
O shapes and hues that please me well !  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

' O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves  
of swine  
That range on yonder plain.

' In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and  
sleep ;  
And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate ;  
And at the last she said :

' I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl.  
I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn  
mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so  
three years

She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his  
ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she  
 turn'd her sight  
 The airy hand confusion wrought,  
 Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite  
 The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
 Fell on her, from which mood was  
 born  
 Scorn of herself; again, from out that  
 mood  
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What ! is not this my place of strength,'  
 she said,  
 'My spacious mansion built for me,  
 Whereof the strong foundation-stones  
 were laid  
 Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
 Uncertain shapes ; and unawares  
 On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears  
 of blood,  
 And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of  
 flame,  
 And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
 On corpses three-months-old at noon she  
 came,  
 That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
 Or power of movement, seem'd my  
 soul,  
 'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
 Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of  
 sand,  
 Left on the shore ; that hears all night  
 The plunging seas draw backward from  
 the land  
 Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
 Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
 The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
 Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
 curl'd.

'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone  
 hall,  
 'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of  
 this world :  
 One deep, deep silence all !'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
 mouldering sod,  
 Inwapt tenfold in slothful shame,  
 Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
 Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,  
 And nothing saw, for her despair,  
 But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
 No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
 And ever worse with growing time,  
 And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
 And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
 With blackness as a solid wall,  
 Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
 Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking  
 slow,  
 In doubt and great perplexity,  
 A little before moon-rise hears the low  
 Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound  
 Of rocks thrown down, or one deep  
 cry  
 Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, 'I  
 have found  
 A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
 There comes no murmur of reply.  
 What is it that will take away my sin,  
 And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,  
 She threw her royal robes away.  
 'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,  
 'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers,  
that are  
So lightly, beautifully built :  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt.'

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown :  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired :  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that doats on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have  
blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall :  
The guilt of blood is at your door :  
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest worth,  
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From yon blue heavens above us bent  
The gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
How'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
You pine among your halls and towers :  
The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must play such pranks as  
these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands ?  
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear ;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year ;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day ;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine ;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline :  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break :  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree ?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be :  
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me ?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen ;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers ;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass ;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the pane :  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high :  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night ;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now ;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place ;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face ;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight for evermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door ;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green :  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :  
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden more :  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother : call me before the day is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

### CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies, .  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done !  
But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there !  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in :  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.



I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet :  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call ;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all ;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear ;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here ;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said ;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, 'It's not for them : it's mine.'  
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret ;  
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.  
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife ;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow ;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—  
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—  
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—  
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE !' he said, and pointed toward  
the land,

'This mounting wave will roll us shore-  
ward soon.'

In the afternoon they came unto a land  
In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did  
swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary  
dream.

Full-faced above the valley stood the  
moon ;

And like a downward smoke, the slender  
stream

Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall  
did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a down-  
ward smoke,

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did  
go ;

And some thro' wavering lights and  
shadows broke,

Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.

They saw the gleaming river seaward  
flow

From the inner land : far off, three  
mountain-tops,

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with  
showery drops,

Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the  
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts  
the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding  
vale

And meadow, set with slender galingale ;  
A land where all things always seem'd  
the same !

And round about the keel with faces  
pale,

Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters  
came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted  
stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they  
gave

To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the  
grave ;

And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart  
did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow  
sand,

Between the sun and moon upon the  
shore ;

And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but ever-  
more

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the  
oar,

Weary the wandering fields of barren  
foam.

Then some one said, 'We will return no  
more ;'

And all at once they sang, 'Our island  
home

Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer  
roam.'

## CHORIC SONG

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between  
walls

Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from  
the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,  
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers  
weep,

And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
hangs in sleep.

## II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from  
weariness?

All things have rest : why should we toil  
alone,

We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,  
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy  
balm ;

Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
'There is no joy but calm !'  
Why should we only toil, the roof and  
crown of things ?

## III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.

Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.

All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no  
toil,

Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we  
have

To war with evil ? Is there any peace

In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward  
the grave

In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
or dreamful ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the down-  
ward stream,

With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
To dream and dream, like yonder amber  
light,

Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on  
the height ;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the  
beach,

And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melan-  
choly ;

To muse and brood and live again in  
memory,

With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an  
urn of brass !

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our wives  
And their warm tears : but all hath  
suffer'd change :

For surely now our household hearths are  
cold :

Our sons inherit us : our looks are  
strange :

And we should come like ghosts to trouble  
joy.

Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel  
sings

Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
things.

Is there confusion in the little isle ?

Let what is broken so remain.

The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There is confusion worse than death,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labour unto aged breath,  
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the  
 pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us,  
     blowing lowly)  
 With half-dropt eyelid still,  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river drawing  
     slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined  
     vine—  
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water  
     falling  
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath  
 divine !  
 Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling  
     brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
     beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
 All day the wind breathes low with  
     mellow tone :  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the  
     yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
 We have had enough of action, and of  
     motion we,  
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
     when the surge was seething free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted  
     his foam-fountains in the sea.  
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with  
     an equal mind,  
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie  
     reclined  
 On the hills like Gods together, careless  
     of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the  
     bolts are hurl'd  
 Far below them in the valleys, and the  
     clouds are lightly curl'd  
 Round their golden houses, girdled with  
     the gleaming world :  
 Where they smile in secret, looking over  
     wasted lands,  
 Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,  
     roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and  
     sinking ships, and praying hands.  
 But they smile, they find a music centred  
     in a doleful song  
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient  
     tale of wrong,  
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the  
     words are strong ;  
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men  
     that cleave the soil,  
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with  
     enduring toil,  
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and  
     wine and oil ;  
 Till they perish and they suffer—some,  
     'tis whisper'd—down in hell  
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian  
     valleys dwell,  
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of  
     asphodel.  
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet  
     than toil, the shore  
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind  
     and wave and oar ;  
 Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will  
     not wander more.

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
     '*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago  
 Sung by the morning star of song, who  
     made

His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
     sweet breath  
 Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
 The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
     With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his  
art

Held me above the subject, as strong  
gales

Held swollen clouds from raining, tho'  
my heart,

Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In  
every land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient  
song

Peopled the hollow dark, like burning  
stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and  
wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging  
hoofs ;

And I saw crowds in column'd sanctu-  
aries ;

And forms that pass'd at windows and on  
roofs

Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet

Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with  
heated blasts

That run before the fluttering tongues  
of fire ;

White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and  
masts,

And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen  
plates,

Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers  
woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron  
grates,

And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when  
to land

Bluster the winds and tides the self-same  
way,

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level  
sand,

Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and strove  
to speak,

As when a great thought strikes along  
the brain,

And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,

That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;  
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing  
thought

Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and  
did creep

Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd,  
and brought

Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far  
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest  
dew

The maidens splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and  
lean

Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with

clearest green,

New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey  
done,

And with dead lips smiled at the twi-  
light plain,

Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;

Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine  
turn'd

Their humid arms festooning tree to  
tree,

And at the root thro' lush green grasses  
burn'd

The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I  
knew

The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn

On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,

Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and  
frame

The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone  
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unbliss-  
ful clime,

'Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine  
own,

Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillter than chisell'd marble, standing  
there;

A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with sur-  
prise

Froze my swift speech: she turning on  
my face

The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my  
name:

No one can be more wise than destiny.

Many drew swords and died. Where'er  
I came

I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,'

I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature  
draws;

'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with  
a curse:

This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron  
years:

My father held his hand upon his face;  
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was  
thick with sighs

As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolf-  
ish eyes,

Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and  
the shore;

The bright death quiver'd at the victim's  
throat;

Touch'd; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow:

'I would the white cold heavy-plung-  
ing foam,

Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep  
below,

Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence  
dear,

As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come  
here,

That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;

A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold  
black eyes,

Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:

'I govern'd men by change, and so I  
sway'd

All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen  
a man.

Once, like the moon, I made



'The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not  
bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with  
mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee,  
friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode  
sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by  
God :  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,  
and lit  
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O  
my life  
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's  
alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die !

'And there he died : and when I heard  
my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook  
my fear  
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his  
fame.  
What else was left ? look here !'

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to  
sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a  
laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier  
found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows,

A name for ever !—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for  
delight ;  
Because with sudden motion from the  
ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with  
light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest  
darts ;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming thro' the  
lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird  
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and  
soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the  
dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
beams divine :  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall  
the dell  
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine  
laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the  
door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied

To where he stands,—so stood I, when  
that flow

Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went  
along

From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome  
light,

With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : ' Heaven heads  
the count of crimes

With that wild oath.' She render'd  
answer high :

' Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

' Single I grew, like some green plant,  
whose root

Creeps to the garden water-pipes be-  
neath,

Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower  
to fruit

Changed, I was ripe for death.

' My God, my land, my father—these did  
move

Me from my bliss of life, that Nature  
gave,

Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of  
love

Down to a silent grave.

' And I went mourning, " No fair Hebrew  
boy

Shall smile away my maiden blame  
among

The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all  
joy,

Leaving the dance and song,

' Leaving the olive-gardens far below,

Leaving the promise of my bridal  
bower,

The valleys of grape-loaded vines that  
glow

Beneath the battled tower.

' The light white cloud swam over us.  
Anon

We heard the lion roaring from his den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by  
one,

Or, from the darken'd glen,

' Saw God divide the night with flying  
flame,

And thunder on the everlasting hills.

I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
became

A solemn scorn of ills.

' When the next moon was roll'd into  
the sky,

Strength came to me that equal'd my  
desire.

How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire !

' It comforts me in this one thought to  
dwell,

That I subdued me to my father's will ;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

' Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from  
Aroer

On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips : she left me where I  
stood :

' Glory to God,' she sang, and past  
afar,

Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,

As one that from a casement leans his  
head,

When midnight bells cease ringing sud-  
denly,

And the old year is dead.

' Alas ! alas !' a low voice, full of care,  
Murmur'd beside me : ' Turn and look  
on me :

I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse  
and poor !

O me, that I should ever see the light !  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and  
trust :

To whom the Egyptian : 'O, you  
tamely died !

You should have clung to Fulvia's waist,  
and thrust

The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white dawn's  
creeping beams,

Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my  
dreams

Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the  
dark,

Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last  
trance

Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of  
Arc,

A light of ancient France ;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish  
Death,

Who kneeling, with one arm about  
her king,

Drew forth the poison with her balmy  
breath,

Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
Gold-mines of thought to lift the  
hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from  
sleep

To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what  
dull pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
strike

Into that wondrous track of dreams  
again !

But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been  
blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past  
years,

In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest  
art,

Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

## THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :  
While all the neighbours shoot thee  
round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine ; the range of lawn and  
park :

The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry :  
Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when  
young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute-notes are changed to  
coarse,

I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are  
new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are, wearily sigh-  
ing :

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my  
friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold,  
my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro :  
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :  
What is it we can do for you ?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack ! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor, my  
friend,  
And a new face at the door, my  
friend,  
A new face at the door.

## TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are  
nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did  
pass ;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is  
seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
 Rose with you thro' a little arc  
 Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
 Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
 I honour and his living worth :  
 A man more pure and bold and just  
 Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
 Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
 Great Nature is more wise than I :  
 I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,  
 I will not even preach to you,  
 'Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
 pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
 She loveth her own anguish deep  
 More than much pleasure. Let her will  
 Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance  
 Of Death is blown in every wind ;'  
 For that is not a common chance  
 That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
 In all our hearts, as mournful light  
 That broods above the fallen sun,  
 And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
 Cast down her eyes, and in her  
 throat

Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
 Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
 How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
 Who miss the brother of your youth ?  
 Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :  
 Both are my friends, and my true  
 breast  
 Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
 That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would  
 make  
 Grief more. 'Twere better I should  
 cease

Although myself could almost take  
 The place of him that sleeps in  
 peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
 Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
 While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
 And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
 Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
 Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
 Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

## ON A MOURNER

## I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
 Imitates God, and turns her face  
 To every land beneath the skies,  
 Counts nothing that she meets with  
 base,  
 But lives and loves in every place ;

## II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
 And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
 The swamp, where humm'd the drop-  
 ping snipe,  
 With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

## III

And on thy heart a finger lays ;  
 Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time  
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
 Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
 Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

## IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
 Going before to some far shrine,  
 Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
 Till all thy life one way incline  
 With one wide Will that closes thine.

## V

And when the zoning eve has died  
 Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
 Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
 bride,  
 From out the borders of the morn,  
 With that fair child betwixt them born.

## VI

And when no mortal motion jars  
 The blackness round the tombing sod,  
 Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
 Comes Faith from tracts no feet have  
 trod,  
 And Virtue, like a household god

## VII

Promising empire ; such as those  
 Once heard at dead of night to greet  
 Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
 With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
 Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
 Within this region I subsist,  
 Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
 And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
 That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
 The land, where girt with friends or  
 foes

A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
 A land of just and old renown,  
 Where Freedom slowly broadens  
 down

From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
 But by degrees to fullness wrought,  
 The strength of some diffusive thought  
 Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
 Opinion, and induce a time  
 When single thought is civil crime,  
 And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to  
 land

The name of Britain trebly great—  
 Tho' every channel of the State  
 Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
 Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
 And I will see before I die  
 The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
 The thunders breaking at her feet :  
 Above her shook the starry lights :  
 She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
 Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
 But fragments of her mighty voice  
 Came rolling on the wind.

Then stopt she down thro' town and field  
 To mingle with the human race,  
 And part by part to men reveal'd  
 The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
 From her isle-altar gazing down, •  
 Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
 And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
 The wisdom of a thousand years  
 Is in them. May perpetual youth  
 Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
 Make bright our days and light our  
 dreams,  
 Turning to scorn with lips divine  
 The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
 From out the storied Past, and used  
 Within the Present, but transfused  
 Thro' future time by power of thought.



True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
Nor feed with crude imaginings  
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
To weakness; neither hide the ray  
From those, not blind, who wait for  
day,  
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;  
But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:  
Cut Prejudice against the grain:  
But gentle words are always gain:  
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise:  
It grows to guerdon after-days:  
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Not clinging to some ancient saw;  
Not master'd by some modern term;  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm:  
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that, working strongly,  
binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Thro' many agents making strong,  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to mark;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole.  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close,  
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like  
Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
 Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
 Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
 That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
 From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
 And if some dreadful need should rise  
 Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
 As we bear blossom of the dead ;  
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

## ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
 To rule by land and sea,  
 Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
 Who wrench'd their rights from thee !

What wonder, if in noble heat  
 Those men thine arms withstood,  
 Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,  
 And in thy spirit with thee fought—  
 Who sprang from English blood !

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
 Lift up thy rocky face,  
 And shatter, when the storms are black,  
 In many a streaming torrent back,  
 The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law  
 The growing world assume,  
 Thy work is thine—The single note  
 From that deep chord which Hampden  
 smote  
 Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
 Her rags scarce held together ;  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
 ' Here, take the goose, and keep you  
 warm,  
 It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
 A goose—'twas no great matter.  
 The goose let fall a golden egg  
 With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the  
 pelf,  
 And ran to tell her neighbours ;  
 And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
 And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
 Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
 Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
 The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
 She felt her heart grow prouder :  
 But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
 It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;  
 It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
 She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
 And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

' A quinsy choke thy cursed note !'  
 Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
 ' Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
 I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;  
 Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
 The goose flew this way and flew that,  
 And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
 They flounder'd all together,  
 There strode a stranger to the door,  
 And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
 He utter'd words of scorning ;  
 ' So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
 It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.

Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder :

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger !'

## ENGLISH IDYLS

### AND OTHER POEMS

#### THE EPIC

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-  
eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all  
kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-  
bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held  
a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christ-  
mas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd  
games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired  
out  
With cutting eights that day upon the  
pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the  
outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider  
sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commis-  
sioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little  
left,

And none abroad : there was no anchor,  
none,  
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt  
his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by  
him.'  
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-  
bowl.'  
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift  
that way  
At college : but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
What came of that ?' 'You know,' said  
Frank, 'he burnt  
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
books'—  
And then to me demanding why ? 'Oh,  
sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said,  
or else  
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a  
truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,'  
said Hall,  
'Why take the style of those heroic times?  
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
Nor we those times ; and why should any  
man  
Remodel models ? these twelve books of  
mine  
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-  
worth,

Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.'  
 'But I,'  
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from  
 this hearth  
 And have it; keep a thing, its use will  
 come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'  
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a  
 horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my  
 ears;  
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
 When we were Freshmen: then at my  
 request  
 He brought it; and the poet little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and  
 aes,  
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

### MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
 King Arthur: then, because his wound  
 was deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
 Lay a great water, and the moon was  
 full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere:

'The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
 The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
 Whereof this world holds record. Such  
 a sleep  
 They sleep—the men I loved. I think  
 that we

Shall never more, at any future time,  
 Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
 deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls  
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
 I perish by this people which I made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
 again

To rule once more—but let what will be,  
 be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
 That without help I cannot last till morn.  
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
 Which was my pride: for thou remem-  
 berest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an  
 arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
 derful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
 across

And took it, and have worn it, like a  
 king:

And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
 In aftertime, this also shall be known:

But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
 And fling him far into the middle mere:  
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
 me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
 thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
 word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
 steep'd

And in the moon athwart the place of  
 tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
 men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
 sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
 stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand  
 Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
 moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran  
 forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,

In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud,

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.

What good should follow this, if this were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily :

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the  
sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd  
in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath :

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is  
done.

Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or  
seen ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
ing him ;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and bran-  
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the  
mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
ing hard :

'My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I  
were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,

And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half  
rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found  
not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on  
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of  
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
'Quick, quick !

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to  
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a  
cry

Before. His own thought drove him, like  
a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and  
right



The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
heels—

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were  
ware

That all the decks were dense with stately  
forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and  
from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one  
comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the  
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge,'

And to the barge they came. There those  
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood : for all his face  
was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing  
east ;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
with drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd  
with dust ;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,  
'Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I  
go ?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes ?

For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is  
dissolved

Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the  
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the  
barge :

'The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,

And God fulfil's Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world.

Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done

May He within Himself make pure ! but  
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are  
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,  
let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or  
goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-  
lawns

And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light,  
that long

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,  
flared and fell :

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with  
sound,

And waked with silence, grunted ' Good !'  
but we

Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he  
read—

Perhaps some modern touches here and  
there

Redeem'd it from the charge of nothing-  
ness—

Or else we loved the man, and prized his  
work ;

I know not : but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud ; as at that time  
of year

The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man  
ill-used,

' There now—that's nothing ! ' drew a  
little back,

And drove his heel into the smoulder'd  
log,

That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :  
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point ; till on to dawn, when  
dreams

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a  
crowd,

There came a bark that, blowing forward,  
bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port ; and all the people  
cried,

' Arthur is come again : he cannot die.'  
Then those that stood upon the hills  
behind

Repeated—' Come again, and thrice as  
fair ;'

And, further inland, voices echo'd—  
' Come

With all good things, and war shall be  
no more.'

At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard  
indeed

The clear church-bells ring in the  
Christmas-morn.

## THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER ;

OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter ; I and he,  
Brothers in Art ; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we  
grew

The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and  
draws

The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet,  
she

So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless  
moons,

The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
'When will *you* paint like this?' and I  
replied,

(My words were half in earnest, half in  
jest,)

'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love,  
unperceived,

A more ideal Artist—he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made  
those eyes

Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of  
March.'

And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see  
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after  
that,

You scarce can fail to match his master-  
piece.'

And up we rose, and on the spur we went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite  
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you  
hear

The windy clanging of the minster clock;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad  
stream,

That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between  
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd  
kine,

And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous  
wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us  
lived

Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not  
heard

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where  
was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common  
mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise of  
her

Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of  
hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like  
winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of  
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,  
That verged upon them, sweeter than the  
dream.

Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark  
East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery  
squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large  
cloud

Drew downward: but all else of heaven  
was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
 And May with me from head to heel.  
 And now,  
 As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were  
 The hour just flown, that morn with all  
 its sound,  
 (For those old Mays had thrice the life  
 of these,)  
 Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
 And, where the hedge-row cuts the  
 pathway, stood,  
 Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
 And lowing to his fellows. From the  
 woods  
 Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
 The lark could scarce get out his notes  
 for joy,  
 But shook his song together as he near'd  
 His happy home, the ground. To left  
 and right,  
 The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;  
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;  
 The redcap whistled; and the nightingale  
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.  
 And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said  
 to me,  
 'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,  
 These birds have joyful thoughts. Think  
 you they sing  
 Like poets, from the vanity of song?  
 Or have they any sense of why they sing?  
 And would they praise the heavens for  
 what they have?'  
 And I made answer, 'Were there nothing  
 else  
 For which to praise the heavens but only  
 love,  
 That only love were cause enough for  
 praise.'  
 Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read  
 my thought,  
 And on we went; but ere an hour had  
 pass'd,  
 We reach'd a meadow slanting to the  
 North;  
 Down which a well-worn pathway courted  
 us  
 To one green wicket in a privet hedge;

This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
 Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;  
 And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume,  
 blew  
 Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
 The garden stretches southward. In the  
 midst  
 A cedar spread his dark-green layers of  
 shade.  
 The garden-glasses glanced, and mo-  
 mently  
 The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.  
 'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps  
 the house.'  
 He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
 He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased  
 I turn'd,  
 And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.  
 For up the porch there grew an Eastern  
 rose,  
 That, flowering high, the last night's gale  
 had caught,  
 And blown across the walk. One arm  
 aloft—  
 Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the  
 shape—  
 Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,  
 A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
 Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the  
 flowers  
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—  
 Ah, happy shade—and still went waver-  
 ing down,  
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have  
 danced  
 The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
 And mix'd with shadows of the common  
 ground!  
 But the full day dwelt on her brows, and  
 sunn'd  
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,  
 And doubled his own warmth against her  
 lips,  
 And on the bounteous wave of such a  
 breast  
 As never pencil drew. Half light, half  
 shade,  
 She stood, a sight to make an old man  
 young.

So rapt, we near'd the house; but she,  
a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance  
turn'd

Into the world without; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
This murmur broke the stillness of that  
air

Which brooded round about her :

'Ah, one rose,  
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers  
cull'd,

Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on  
lips

Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd : but all  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-pos-  
sess'd

Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and  
that,

Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turn-  
ing, wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her  
lips

For some sweet answer, tho' no answer  
came,

Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white  
star

Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the  
dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong  
way

With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top  
of Art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master,  
Love,

A more ideal Artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep  
for joy,

Reading her perfect features in the gloom,

Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise of  
life

Swarm'd in the golden present, such a  
voice

Call'd to me from the years to come, and  
such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
dark.

And all that night I heard the watchman  
peal

The sliding season : all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odours on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir  
to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward  
squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where she  
dwelt.

Light pretexts drew me ; sometimes a  
Dutch love

For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city rooms ; or fruits and  
cream

Served in the weeping elm ; and more and  
more

A word could bring the colour to my  
cheek ;

A thought would fill my eyes with happy  
dew ;

Love trebled life within me, and with  
each

The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
One after one, thro' that still garden  
pass'd ;

Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the  
shade ;

And each in passing touch'd with some  
new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by  
day,

Like one that never can be wholly known,

Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought  
 an hour  
 For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I  
 will,'  
 Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to  
 hold  
 From thence thro' all the worlds : but I  
 rose up  
 Full of his bliss, and following her dark  
 eyes  
 Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
 The wicket-gate, and found her standing  
 there.

There sat we down upon a garden  
 mound,  
 Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,  
 Between us, in the circle of his arms  
 Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
 Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
 Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
 Reveal'd their shining windows : from  
 them clash'd  
 The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time  
 we play'd,  
 We spoké of other things ; we coursed  
 about  
 The subject most at heart, more near and  
 near,  
 Like doves about a dove-cote, wheeling  
 round  
 The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoké  
 to her,  
 Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
 Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
 Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
 A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;  
 And in that time and place she answer'd  
 me,  
 And in the compass of three little words,  
 More musical than ever came in one,  
 The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
 Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am  
 thine.'

Shall I cease here ? Is this enough to  
 say  
 That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
 Merged in completion ? Would you learn  
 at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial  
 grades  
 Beyond all grades develop'd ? and indeed  
 I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
 But while I mused came Memory with  
 sad eyes,  
 Holding the folded annals of my youth ;  
 And while I mused, Love with knit brows  
 went by,  
 And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
 And spake, 'Be wise : not easily forgiven  
 Are those, who setting wide the doors that  
 bar

The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my words  
 have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-  
 wells—

Of that which came between, more sweet  
 than each,

In whispers, like the whispers of the  
 leaves

That tremble round a nightingale—in  
 sighs

Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utter-  
 ance,

Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I  
 not tell

Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
 given,

And vows, where there was never need  
 of vows,

And kisses, where the heart on one wild  
 leap

Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces

pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting  
 stars ;

Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river-  
 shores,

And in the hollows ; or as once we met  
 Unheeding, tho' beneath a whispering  
 rain

Night slid down one long stream of sigh-  
 ing wind,

And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.  
 But this whole hour your eyes have  
 been intent



On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds

May not be dwell'd on by the common day.  
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul ;

Make thine heart ready with thine eyes :  
the time

Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
My first, last love ; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and, alas !  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

### DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
William and Dora. William was his son,  
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,

And often thought, ' I'll make them man and wife.'

Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
And yearn'd toward William ; but the youth, because

He had been always with her in the house,  
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day  
When Allan call'd his son, and said,  
' My son :

I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.

Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well  
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died

In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;

For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,

For many years.' But William answer'd short ;

' I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,  
and said :

' You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus ?

But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;

Consider, William : take a month to think,

And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,

And never more darken my doors again.' But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,

And broke away. The more he look'd at her

The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then before

The month was out he left his father's house,

And hired himself to work within the fields ;

And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed

A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing,  
Allan call'd

His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ;

But if you speak with him that was my son,

Or change a word with her he calls his wife,

My home is none of yours. My will is law.'

And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,

' It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change !'

And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William ; then distresses came on him ;

And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,

Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.

But Dora stored what little she could save,

And sent it<sup>o</sup> them by stealth, nor did they  
know

Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and  
thought

Hard things of Dora. Dora came and  
said :

' I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's  
gone,

And for your sake, the woman that he  
chose,

And for this orphan, I am come to you :  
You know there has not been for these  
five years

So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart  
is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless 'him for the sake of him that's  
gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went  
her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies  
grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not ; for none of all his  
men

Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to  
him,

But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers  
reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was  
dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose  
and took

The child once more, and sat upon the  
mound ;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,

And came and said : ' Where were you  
yesterday ?

Whose child is that ? What are you doing  
here ?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, ' This is William's  
child !'

' And did I not,' said Allan, ' did I not  
Forbid you, Dora ?' Dora said again :  
' Do with me as you will, but take the  
child,

And bless him for the sake of him that's  
gone !'

And Allan said, ' I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you !  
You knew my word was law, and yet you  
dared

To slight it. Well—for I will take the  
boy ;

But go you hence, and never see me more.'  
So saying, he took the boy that cried  
aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of  
flowers fell

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her  
hands,

And the boy's cry came to her from the  
field,

More and more distant. She bow'd  
down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She  
bow'd down

And wept in secret ; and the reapers  
reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was  
dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and  
stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in  
praise

To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :  
He says that he will never see me more.'  
Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on  
thyself :

And, now I think, he shall not have the  
boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to  
slight  
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,  
And I will have my boy, and bring him  
home ;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back :  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one  
house,  
And work for William's child, until he  
grows  
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd  
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the  
farm.  
The door was off the latch : they peep'd,  
and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's  
knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the  
cheeks,  
Like one that loved him : and the lad  
stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that  
hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the  
fire.  
Then they came in : but when the boy  
beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her :  
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :  
'O Father !—if you let me call you  
so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I  
come  
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you  
well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at  
peace  
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he  
said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he  
said  
That he was wrong to cross his father  
thus :

"God bless him !" he said ;—"and may  
he never know  
The troubles I have gone thro' !" Then  
he turn'd  
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am !  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for  
you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn  
to slight  
His father's memory ; and take Dora  
back,

And let all this be as it was before.'  
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
And all at once the old man burst in  
sobs :—

'I have been to blame—to blame. I  
have kill'd my son.  
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my  
dear son.  
May God forgive me !—I have been to  
blame.  
Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many  
times.  
And all the man was broken with re-  
morse ;  
And all his love came back a hundred-  
fold ;  
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er Wil-  
liam's child  
Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together ; and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

## AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and  
not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast  
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow  
quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,

And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'  
 Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,  
 And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
 To where the bay runs up its latest horn.  
 We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
 The flat red granite; so by many a sweep  
 Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd  
 The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all  
 The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
 And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
 With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
 And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.  
 There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
 A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
 Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
 And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
 Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
 Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
 Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,  
 A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
 Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat  
 And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,  
 Who married, who was like to be, and how  
 The races went, and who would rent the hall:  
 Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
 This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
 The four-field system, and the price of grain;  
 And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
 And came again together on the king  
 With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;  
 And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—  
 'Oh! who would fight and march and countermarch,  
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
 And shovell'd up into some bloody trench  
 Where no one knows? but let me live my life.  
 'Oh! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
 Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
 Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.  
 'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name  
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
 I might as well have traced it in the sands;  
 The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.  
 'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,  
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
 Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.'  
 He sang his song, and I replied with mine:  
 I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
 Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,  
 His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
 Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
 I set the words, and added names I knew.  
 'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:  
 Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
 And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.  
 'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;  
 Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
 For thou art fairer than all else that is.  
 'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:  
 Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:  
 I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.  
 'I go, but I return: I would I were  
 The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,

The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,

My friend; and I, that having where-withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon,  
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down

The bay was oily calm; the harbour-buoy,

Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

## WALKING TO THE MAIL

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
Is yon plantation where this byway joins  
The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
No, not the County Member's with the vane:

Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:  
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face

From all men, and commercing with himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
That keeps us all in order more or less—  
And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—

There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker tickling trout—

Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—

*Delicto*: but his house, for so they say,  
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, 'What!

You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost

(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds,)

'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once :

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing :  
A body slight and round, and like a pear  
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it  
flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager,  
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame  
and pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she  
sour'd

To what she is : a nature never kind !  
Like men, like manners : like breeds like,  
they say :

Kind nature is the best : those manners  
next

That fit us like a nature second-hand ;  
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill  
that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove  
him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the  
cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff  
brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen  
him wince

As from a venomous thing : he thought  
himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
Should break his sleep by night, and his  
nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody  
thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir,  
you know

That these two parties still divide the  
world—

Of those that want, and those that have :  
and still

The same old sore breaks out from age  
to age

With much the same result. Now I  
myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
I was at school—a college in the South :  
There lived a flayflint near : we stole his  
fruit,

His hens, his eggs ; but there was law  
for us ;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir.  
She,

With meditative grunts of much content,  
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and  
mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the college  
tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork-  
screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the groan-  
ing sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she  
pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the mother  
sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved  
As one by one we took them—but for  
this—

As never sow was higher in this world—  
Might have been happy : but what lot is  
pure ?

We took them all, till she was left alone  
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out ?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man ?  
His nerves were wrong. What ails us,  
who are sound,

That we should mimic this raw fool the  
world,

Which charts us all in its coarse blacks  
or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.



But put your best foot forward, or I  
fear  
That we shall miss the mail : and here it  
comes  
With five at top : as quaint a four-in-hand  
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a  
roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS ;

## OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a  
year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
See here, my doing : curves of mountain,  
bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a  
rock

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
aires,

Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimnied  
bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward  
Bull

The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss and  
fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row, to  
swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he  
seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion ; and he answer'd  
me ;

And well his words became him : was he  
not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he  
spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love  
for her.

My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and  
change

With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between ;  
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it  
sweet

To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he  
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward  
Bull,

'I take it, God made the woman for  
the man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world.

A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal  
ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and in-  
deed

Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid  
stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe  
too low :

But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his :  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce have other music : yet say on.

What should one give to light on such a dream?’

I ask’d him half-sardonically.

‘Give?

Give all thou art,’ he answer’d, and a light

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;  
‘I would have hid her needle in my heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin: my ears could hear

Her lightest breath; her least remark  
was worth

The experience of the wise. I went and came;

Her voice fled always thro’ the summer land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!

The flower of each, those moments when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no more.’

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something jar’d;

Whether he spoke too largely; that there seem’d

A touch of something false, some self-conceit,

Or over-smoothness: howsoe’er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said:

‘Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?

But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:  
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within;

Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,

That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place: ’tis from no want in her:

It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.’

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:

‘God made the woman for the use of man,

And for the good and increase of the world.’

And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused

About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms

And alders, garden-isles; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lisping lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,

My suit had wither’d, nipt to death by him

That was a God, and is a lawyer’s clerk,  
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.

’Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no more:

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,  
The close, ‘Your Letty, only yours;’ and this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn

Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart

The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;

And out I stept, and up I crept: she moved,

Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers:

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,

She turn’d, we closed, we kiss’d, swore faith, I breathed

In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed : 'Leave,' she  
cried,

'O leave me !' 'Never, dearest, never :  
here

I brave the worst : ' and while we stood  
like fools

Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they  
came

Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. 'What,  
with him !

Go' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus) ;  
'him !'

I choked. Again they shriek'd the  
burthen—'Him !'

Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go !—  
Girl, get you in !' She went—and in one  
month

They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery  
smile.

And educated whisker. But for me,  
They set an ancient creditor to work :  
It seems I broke a close with force and  
arms :

There came a mystic token from the king  
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
I read, and fled by night, and flying  
turn'd :

Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the  
storm ;

So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to  
hear.

Nor cared to hear ? perhaps : yet long  
ago

I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,  
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,  
She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
For in the dust and drouth of London life  
She moves among my visions of the lake,  
While the prime swallow dips his wing,  
or then

While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
The light cloud smoulders on the summer  
crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and crust  
of sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce  
meet

For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn and  
sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with storms  
of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.  
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
God,

This not be all in vain, that thrice ten  
years,

Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes  
and cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,  
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, dâmp, and  
sleet, and snow ;

And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy  
rest,

Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and  
the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not  
breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were  
still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin,  
that crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the  
first,

For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt  
away,

Would chatter with the cold, and all my  
beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with  
sound

Of pious hymns and psalms, and some-  
times saw

An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws  
nigh ;

I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognise the fields I  
know ;

And both my thighs are rotted with the  
dew ;

Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary  
head,

Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the  
stone,

Have mercy, mercy : take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved ? who is it may be  
saved ?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more  
than I.

For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn  
In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of  
death.

Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the  
well,

Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvel'd greatly. More  
than this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might  
grow to thee,

I lived up there on yonder mountain  
side.

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist,  
and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder, and  
sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eating  
not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those  
that came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles,  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst man-  
kind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou,  
O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.

Have mercy, mercy ! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone  
with thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of  
twelve ;

And twice three years I crouch'd on one  
that rose

Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew  
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as  
this—

Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial, which my sorrow  
crowns—

So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
'Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd  
long

For ages and for ages !' then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are  
checked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all  
the saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on  
earth

House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-  
some food,

And wear warm clothes, and even beasts  
have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the  
light,

Bow down one thousand and two hundred  
times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
saints ;

Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am

wet

With drenching dews, or stiff with crack-  
ling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my  
back ;

A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the

cross,

And strive and wrestle with thee till I  
die :

O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I  
am ;

A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :  
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of  
mine ;

Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for  
this,

That here come those that worship me ?  
Ha ! ha !

They think that I am somewhat. What  
am I ?

The silly people take me for a saint,  
And bring me offerings of fruit and  
flowers :

And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness  
here)

Have all in all endured as much, and  
more

Than many just and holy men, whose  
names

Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.

What is it I can have done to merit this ?

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
And cured some halt and maim'd ; but  
what of that ?

It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
May match his pains with mine ; but  
what of that ?

Yet do not rise ; for you may look on me,  
And in your looking you may kneel to  
God.

Speak ! is there any of you halt or maim'd ?  
I think you know I have some power  
with Heaven

From my long penance : let him speak  
his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes  
forth from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah,  
hark ! they shout

'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,  
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
Can I work miracles and not be saved ?  
This is not told of any. They were saints.  
It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;  
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,  
'Behold a saint !'

And lower voices saint me from above.

Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere  
death

Spreads more and more and more, that  
God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful  
record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,

I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname

Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon,

The watcher on the column till the end ;

I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine  
bakes ;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours  
become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now

From my high nest of penance here pro-  
claim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side

Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals  
 I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
 Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my  
 sleeve,  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
 I smote them with the cross ; they  
 swarm'd again.  
 In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd  
 my chest :  
 They flapp'd my light out as I read : I  
 saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my  
 book ;  
 With colt-like whinny and with hoggish  
 whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way  
 was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges and  
 with thorns ;  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may  
 be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with  
 slow steps,  
 With slow, faint steps, and much exceed-  
 ing pain,  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire,  
 that still  
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the  
 praise :  
 God only thro' his bounty hath thought  
 fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this  
 world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,  
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do not  
 say  
 But that a time may come—yea, even  
 now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the thresh-  
 old stairs  
 Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without re-  
 proach ;  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve a shrine about my  
 dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my  
 bones,

When I am gather'd to the glorious  
 saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewd-  
 est pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloudlike  
 change,

In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the  
 end !

Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape,  
 a shade,

A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
 That holds a crown ? Come, blessed  
 brother, come.

I know thy glittering face. I waited  
 long ;

My brows are ready. What ! deny it  
 now ?

Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I  
 clutch it. Christ !

'Tis gone : 'tis here again ; the crown !  
 the crown !

So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and  
 frankincense.

Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints :  
 I trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet  
 for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of  
 God,

Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,  
 Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
 Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

## THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
 That stand within the chace.



Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
 And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
 Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
 I spoke without restraint,  
 And with a larger faith appeal'd  
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
 And told him of my choice,  
 Until he plagiarised a heart,  
 And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
 None else could understand ;  
 I found him garrulously given,  
 A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
 Is many a weary hour ;  
 'Twere well to question him, and try  
 If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
 Whose topmost branches can discern  
 The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
 If ever maid or spouse,  
 As fair as my Olivia, came  
 To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
 Whatever maiden grace  
 The good old Summers, year by year  
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
 The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
 And number'd bead, and shrift,  
 Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
 And turn'd the cowls adrift :

'And I have seen some score of those  
 Fresh faces, that would thrive  
 When his man-minded offset rose  
 To chase the deer at five ;

'And all that from the town would stroll,  
 Till that wild wind made work  
 In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
 Went by me, like a stork :

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
 And others, passing praise,  
 Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
 For puritanic stays :

'And I have shadow'd many a group  
 Of beauties, that were born  
 In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
 Or while the patch was worn ;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
 About me leap'd and laugh'd  
 The modish Cupid of the day,  
 And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects prick  
 Each leaf into a gall)  
 This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
 Is three times worth them all ;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
 Have faded long ago ;  
 But in these latter springs I saw  
 Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens  
 A baby-germ, to when  
 The maiden blossoms of her teens  
 Could number five from ten.

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
 (And hear me with thine ears,)   
 That, tho' I circle in the grain  
 Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

'For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
'That oft hast heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy :  
As cowslip unto oxslip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf ;  
She left the new piano shut :  
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child :

'But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my "giant bole" ;

'And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist :  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace !  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

'And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

'For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss ;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more : the day was warm ;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ;

'A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ancle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
 Look further thro' the chace,  
 Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
 The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
 That but a moment lay  
 Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
 Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
 The warmth it thence shall win  
 To riper life may magnetise  
 The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
 Or lapse from hand to hand,  
 Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
 Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
 Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
 That art the fairest-spoken tree  
 From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top  
 All throats that gurgle sweet !  
 All starry culmination drop  
 Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—  
 And while he sinks or swells  
 The full south-breeze around thee blow  
 The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
 That under deeply strikes !  
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
 High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
 But, rolling as in sleep,  
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
 That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
 That only by thy side  
 Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
 And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,  
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
 And praise thee more in both  
 Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,  
 Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke ;  
 And more than England honours that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn.

## LOVE AND DUTY

OF love that never found his earthly close,  
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and break-  
 ing hearts?

Or all the same as if he had not been?  
 Not so. Shall Error in the round of  
 time

Still father Truth? O shall the braggart  
 shout

For some blind glimpse of freedom work  
 itself

Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law  
 System and empire? Sin itself be found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
 And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
 Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
 Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of him-  
 self?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were  
 all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
 The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless  
 days,

The long mechanic paces to and fro,  
 The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
 But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?  
 O three times less unworthy! likewise  
 thou

Art more thro' Love, and greater than  
thy years,  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will  
bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed  
to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in  
Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect  
end.  
Will some one say, Then why not ill  
for good?  
Why took ye not your pastime? To that  
man  
My work shall answer, since I knew the  
right  
And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a man.  
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and  
me—  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart  
so slow  
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears  
would dwell  
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
Then not to dare to see! when thy low  
voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to  
keep  
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a  
leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy  
neck,  
And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that  
weigh'd  
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!  
For Love himself took part against  
himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated  
—came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and  
mine,  
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy  
bride,'  
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:  
Hard is my doom and thine: thou  
knowest it all.  
Could Love part thus? was it not well  
to speak,  
To have spoken once? It could not but  
be well.  
The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
things good,  
The slow sad hours that bring us all  
things ill,  
And all good things from evil, brought  
the night  
In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want, that hollow'd all the  
heart,  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
That burn'd upon its object thro' such  
tears  
As flow but once a life.  
The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred times  
In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and  
died.  
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the  
words  
That make a man feel strong in speaking  
truth;  
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
In that brief night; the summer night,  
that paused  
Among her stars to hear us; stars that  
hung  
Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of  
Time  
Spun round in station, but the end had  
come.  
O then like those, who clench their  
nerves to rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd  
it,  
And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—  
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing  
 all  
 Life needs for life is possible to will—  
 Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended  
 by  
 My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross  
 thy thoughts  
 Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest  
 hold,  
 If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy  
 dreams,  
 O might it come like one that looks con-  
 tent,  
 With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
 And point thee forward to a distant light,  
 Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
 And leave thee freër, till thou wake  
 refresh'd  
 Then when the first low matin-chirp hath  
 grown  
 Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow  
 of pearl  
 Far furrowing into light the mounded  
 rack,  
 Beyond the fair green field and eastern  
 sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which  
 Leonard wrote :  
 It was last summer on a tour in Wales :  
 Old James was with me : we that day  
 had been  
 Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard  
 there,  
 And found him in Llanberis : then we  
 crost  
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half  
 way up  
 The counter side ; and that same song of  
 his  
 He told me ; for I banter'd him, and  
 swore  
 They said he lived shut up within himself,  
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,

That, setting the *how much* before the  
*how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horseleech,  
 ' Give,  
 Cram us with all,' but count not me the  
 herd !  
 To which ' They call me what they  
 will,' he said :  
 ' But I was born too late ; the fair new  
 forms,  
 That float about the threshold of an age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be  
 caught—  
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher  
 crown'd—  
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
 These measured words, my work of  
 yestermorn.  
 ' We sleep and wake and sleep, but all  
 things move ;  
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;  
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her  
 ellipse ;  
 And human things returning on them-  
 selves  
 Move onward, leading up the golden year.  
 ' Ah, tho' the times, when some new  
 thought can bud,  
 Are but as poets' seasons when they  
 flower,  
 Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,  
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
 march,  
 And slow and sure comes up the golden  
 year.  
 ' When wealth no more shall rest in  
 mounded heaps,  
 But smit with freër light shall slowly  
 melt  
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
 And light shall spread, and man be liker  
 man  
 Thro' all the season of the golden year.  
 ' Shall eagles not be eagles ? wrens be  
 wrens ?  
 If all the world were falcons, what of  
 that ?  
 The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
 But he not less the eagle. Happy days



Roll onward, leading up the golden year.  
 'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the  
 Press ;

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross ;  
 Knit land to land, and blowing haven-  
 ward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear  
 of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.  
 'But we grow old. Ah ! when shall  
 all men's good

Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
 Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
 And like a lane of beams athwart the  
 sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden year ?'  
 Thus far he flow'd, and ended ; where-  
 upon

'Ah, folly !' in mimic cadence answer'd  
 James—

'Ah, folly ! for it lies so far away,  
 Not in our time, nor in our children's  
 time,

'Tis like the second world to us that live ;  
 'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on  
 Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.'

With that he struck his staff against  
 the rocks

And broke it,—James,—you know him,  
 —old, but full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his  
 feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
 O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis :

Then added, all in heat :

'What stuff is this !  
 Old writers push'd the happy season  
 back,—

The more fools they,—we forward :  
 dreamers both :

You most, that in an age, when every  
 hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the  
 death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman,  
 rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not  
 plunge

-His hand into the bag : but well I know

That unto him who works, and feels he  
 works,

This same grand year is ever at the  
 doors.'

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard  
 them blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great  
 echo flap

And buffet round the hills, from bluff to  
 bluff.

## ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,  
 By this still hearth, among these barren  
 crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and  
 dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and  
 know not me.

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with  
 those

That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and  
 when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
 For always roaming with a hungry heart  
 Much have I seen and known ; cities of  
 men

And manners, climates, councils, govern-  
 ments,

Myself not-least, but honour'd of them  
 all ;

And drunk delight of battle with my  
 peers,

Far on the ringing plains of windy  
 Troy.

I am a part of all that I have met ;  
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose  
 margin fades

For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !  
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled  
 on life

Were all too little, and of one to me

Little remains : but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something  
     more,  
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it  
     were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard  
     myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human  
     thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labour, by slow prudence to make  
     mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the  
     sphere

Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work,  
     I mine.

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs  
     her sail :

There gloom the dark broad seas. My  
     mariners,

Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and  
     thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and  
     opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I  
     are old ;

Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;  
 Death closes all : but something ere the  
     end,

Some work of noble note, may yet be  
     done,

Not unbecoming men that strove with  
     Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the  
     rocks :

The long day wanes : the slow moon  
     climbs : the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come,  
     my friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose  
     holds

To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
     down :

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we  
     knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and  
     tho'

We are not now that strength which in  
     old days

Moved earth and heaven ; that which we  
     are, we are ;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong  
     in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

## TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and  
     fall,

The vapours weep their burthen to the  
     ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies  
     beneath,

And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality

Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,

A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a  
     dream

The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of  
     morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a  
     man—

So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
     seem'd

To his great heart none other than a God !  
 I ask'd thee, ' Give me immortality.'

Then didst thou grant mine asking with  
     a smile,

Like wealthy men who care not how they  
     give.

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd  
their wills,

And beat me down and marr'd and wasted  
me,

And tho' they could not end me, left me  
maim'd

To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,

And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,

Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill  
with tears

To hear me? Let me go : take back thy  
gift :

Why choose a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet  
for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ; there  
comes

A glimpse of that dark world where I  
was born.

Once more the old mysterious glimmer  
steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy  
shoulders pure,

And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
gloom,

Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to  
mine,

Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild  
team

Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke,  
arise,

And shake the darkness from their  
loosen'd manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer  
given

Departest, and thy tears are on my  
cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy  
tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,

In days far-off, on that dark earth, be  
true ?

'The Gods themselves cannot recall their  
gifts.'

Ay me ! ay me ! with what another  
heart

In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—

The lucid outline forming round thee ;  
saw

The dim curls kindle into sunny rings ;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and

felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd

all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I

lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-  
warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening  
buds

Of April, and could hear the lips that  
kiss'd

Whispering I knew not what of wild and  
sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo-  
sing,

While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East :  
How can my nature longer mix with  
thine ?

Coldly thy resy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled  
feet

Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when  
the steam

Floats up from those dim fields about the  
homes

Of happy men that have the power to  
die,

And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground ;

Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my  
grave :

Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
morn ;

I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn :  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.——

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong ;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought :  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule !  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well—'tis well that I should bluster !—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—  
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit ?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the mind ?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak and move :  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore ?  
No—she never loved me truly : love is love for evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should I care ?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these ?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.



Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint:  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat ;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd ;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space ;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow-foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

\* I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and there  
I shaped  
The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,  
And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but  
she

Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought

Their children, clamouring, ' If we pay,  
we starve ! '

She sought her lord, and found him, where  
he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair

A yard behind. She told him of their  
tears,

And pray'd him, ' If they pay this tax,  
they starve.'

Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
' You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these* ? '—' But I would die,'  
said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by  
Paul :

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear ;  
' Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk ! '—' Alas ! ' she  
said,

' But prove me what it is I would not do.'  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, ' Ride you naked thro' the  
town,

And I repeal it ; ' and nodding, as in scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among his  
dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and  
blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet,  
all

The hard condition ; but that she would  
loose

The people : therefore, as they loved her  
well,

From then till noon no foot should pace  
the street,

No eye look down, she passing ; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and  
window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,  
and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon  
Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her  
head,

And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her  
knee ;

Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam,  
slid

From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey  
trapt

In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with  
chastity :

The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for  
fear.

The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the  
spout

Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's foot-  
fall shot

Light horrors thro' her pulses : the blind  
walls

Were full of chinks and holes ; and  
overhead

Fantastic gables, crowding, stared : but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the  
field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the  
wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with  
chastity :

And one low churl, compact of thankless  
earth,

The fatal byword of all years to come,

Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had  
their will,

Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers,  
who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;  
And she, that knew not, pass'd : and all  
at once,

With twelve great shocks of sound, the  
shameless noon

Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred  
towers,

One after one : but even then she gain'd  
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and  
crown'd,

To meet her lord, she took the tax away  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE DAY-DREAM

### PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :

A pleasant hour has passed away

While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.

As by the lattice you reclined,

I went thro' many wayward moods

To see you dreaming—and, behind,

A summer crisp with shining woods.

And I too dream'd, until at last

Across my fancy, brooding warm,

The reflex of a legend past,

And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,

And see the vision that I saw,

Then take the broidery-frame, and add

A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,

Nor look with that too-earnest eye—

The rhymes are dazzled from their place

And order'd words asunder fly.

### THE SLEEPING PALACE

#### I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,

Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins.  
 Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows  
     come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb.

## II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
 The fountain to his place returns  
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
 Here droops the banner on the tower,  
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
 The peacock in his laurel bower,  
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :  
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
 The mantles from the golden pegs  
 Droop sleepily : no sound is made,  
 Not even of a gnat that sings.  
 More like a picture seemeth all  
 Than those old portraits of old kings,  
 That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
 Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and  
     there  
 The wrinkled steward at his task,  
 The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;  
 The page has caught her hand in his :  
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak :  
 His own are pouted to a kiss :  
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek :

## V

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
 Make prisms in every carven glass,  
 And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
 His state the king reposing keeps.  
 He must have been a jovial king.

## VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
 At distance like a little wood ;  
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
 And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
 All creeping plants, a wall of green  
 Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,  
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII

When will the hundred summers die,  
 And thought and time be born again,  
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
 Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
 Here all things in their place remain,  
 As all were order'd, ages since.  
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

## I

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
 She lying on her couch alone,  
 Across the purple coverlet,  
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
 On either side her tranced form  
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl

## II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
 Languidly ever ; and, amid  
 Her full black ringlets downward  
     roll'd,  
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
 With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
 Her constant beauty doth inform  
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
 In palace chambers far apart.  
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
 That lie upon her charmed heart.

She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly  
 prest :  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL

## I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth ;  
 For love in sequel works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden  
 worth.  
 He travels far from other skies—  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead :  
 'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 'The many fail : the one succeeds.'

## III

He comes, scarce knowing what he  
 seeks :  
 He breaks the hedge : he enters  
 there :  
 The colour flies into his cheeks :  
 He trusts to light on something fair ;  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV

More close and close his footsteps  
 wind :  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.

His spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

## THE REVIVAL

## I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;  
 A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
 squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
 clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III

And last with these the king awoke,  
 And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
 spoke,  
 'By holy rood, a royal beard !  
 How say you ? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap.'  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still  
 My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago ?'  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply :  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by.



## THE DEPARTURE

## I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,  
 And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old :  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him.

## II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,  
 O love, for such another kiss ;'  
 'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,  
 'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'  
 And o'er them many a sliding star,  
 And many a merry wind was borne,  
 And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
 The twilight melted into morn.

## III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep !'  
 'O happy sleep, that lightly fled !'  
 'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !'  
 'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !'  
 And o'er them many a flowing range  
 Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
 And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
 The twilight died into the dark.

## IV

'A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
 And whither goest thou, tell me where ?'  
 'O seek my father's court with me,  
 For there are greater wonders there.'  
 And o'er the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 Beyond the night, across the day,  
 Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL

## I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And if you find no moral there,  
 Go, look in any glass and say,  
 What moral is in being fair.

Oh, to what uses shall we put  
 The wildweed-flower that simply blows ?  
 And is there any moral shut  
 Within the bosom of the rose ?

## II

But any man that walks the mead,  
 In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
 According as his humours lead,  
 A meaning suited to his mind.  
 And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;  
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI

## I

You shake your head. A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends ;  
 To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men ;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again ;  
 To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers ;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times.

## II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Thro' sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinquennials would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—  
 Be still the first to leap to light  
 That I might kiss those eyes awake !

For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care ;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there :  
 And, am I right or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you ;  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
 hopes,  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly  
 join'd ?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind ;  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may  
 give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 'What wonder, if he thinks me fair ?'  
 What wonder I was all unwise,  
 To shape the song for your delight  
 Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
 That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
 light ?  
 Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
 By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
 But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
 And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION

My father left a park to me,  
 But it is wild and barren,  
 A garden too with scarce a tree,  
 And waster than a warren :  
 Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
 It is not bad but good land,  
 And in it is the germ of all  
 That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
 In days of old Amphion,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 Nor cared for seed or scion !  
 And had I lived when song was great,  
 And legs of trees were limber,  
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
 And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
 Such happy intonation,  
 Wherever he sat down and sung  
 He left a small plantation ;  
 Wherever in a lonely grove  
 He set up his forlorn pipes,  
 The gouty oak began to move,  
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stir'd its bushy crown,  
 And, as tradition teaches,  
 Young ashes pirouetted down  
 Coquetting with young beeches ;  
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
 Ran forward to his rhyming,  
 And from the valleys underneath  
 Came little cosses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
 And down the middle, buzz ! she went  
 With all her bees behind her ;  
 The poplars, in long order due,  
 With cypress promenaded,  
 The shock-head willows two and two  
 By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
 Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
 Poussetting with a sloe-tree :

Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-  
frighten'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexible then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the  
twigs !

And make her dance attendance ;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle ;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;  
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening thro' there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees  
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy ;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom :  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

## ST. AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord :  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
To yonder shining ground ;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round ;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee ;  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be.  
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
The flashes come and go ;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,

And deepens on and up ! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide—  
 A light upon the shining sea—  
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

### SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
 The horse and rider reel :  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
 And when the tide of combat stands,  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
 On whom their favours fall !  
 For them I battle till the end,  
 To save from shame and thrall :  
 But all my heart is drawn above,  
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and  
 shrine :

I never felt the kiss of love,  
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
 Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
 A light before me swims,  
 Between dark stems the forest glows,  
 I hear a noise of hymns :  
 Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
 I hear a voice but none are there ;  
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
 The tapers burning fair.  
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
 I find a magic bark ;  
 I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
 I float till all is dark.  
 A gentle sound, an awful light !  
 Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
 On sleeping wings they sail.  
 Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
 As down dark tides the glory slides,  
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,  
 The cock crows ere the Christmas  
 morn,  
 The streets are dumb with snow.  
 The tempest crackles on the leads,  
 And, ringing, springs from brand and  
 mail ;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
 And gilds the driving hail.  
 I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
 No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
 But blessed forms in whistling storms  
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
 Such hope, I know not fear ;  
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
 That often meet me here.  
 I muse on joy that will not cease,  
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
 Whose odours haunt my dreams ;  
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
 This mortal armour that I wear,  
 This weight and size, this heart and  
 eyes,  
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
 And thro' the mountain-walls  
 A rolling organ-harmony  
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
 'O just and faithful knight of God !  
 Ride on ! the prize is near.'

So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
 Until I find the holy Grail.

## EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
 Met me walking on yonder way,  
 'And have you lost your heart?' she said ;  
 'And are you married yet, Edward  
 Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
 'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
 Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
 Against her father's and mother's will :  
 To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
 By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
 Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;  
 Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
 When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
 Cruelly came they back to-day :  
 "You're too slight and fickle," I said,  
 "To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass—  
 Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair :  
 I repent me of all I did :  
 Speak a little, Ellen Adair !"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
 On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
 "Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
 And here the heart of Edward Gray !"

'Love may come, and love may go,  
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree ;  
 But I will love no more, no more,  
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
 And there the heart of Edward Gray !'

WILL WATERPROOF'S  
LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
 Go fetch a pint of port :  
 But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind,  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind,  
 To make me write my random rhymes,  
 Ere they be half-forgotten ;  
 Nor add and alter, many times,  
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
 Her laurel in the wine,  
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
 These favour'd lips of mine ;  
 Until the charm have power to make  
 New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
 And barren commonplaces break  
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
 Her gradual fingers steal  
 And touch upon the master-chord  
 Of all I felt and feel.  
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
 And phantom hopes assemble ;  
 And that child's heart within the man's  
 Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
 By many pleasant ways,  
 Against its fountain upward runs  
 The current of my days :  
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;  
 The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
 My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
 Unboding critic-pen,  
 Or that eternal want of pence,  
 Which vexes public men,  
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
 For that which all deny them—  
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
 And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
 Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
 There must be stormy weather ;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;  
 If old things, there are new ;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true.  
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
 With fair horizons bound :  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out a perfect round.  
 High over roaring Temple-bar,  
 And set in Heaven's third story,  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
 Half-mused, or zeeling ripe,  
 The pint, you brought me, was the best  
 That ever came from pipe.  
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
 Is there some magic in the place ?  
 Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
 No pint of white or red  
 Had ever half the power to turn  
 This wheel within my head,

Which bears a season'd brain about,  
 Unsubject to confusion,  
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay,  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay :  
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
 We drink defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
 And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,  
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo ;  
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all-in-all to all :  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker,  
 Used all her fiery will, and smote  
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
 The waiter's hands, that reach  
 To each his perfect pint of stout,  
 His proper chop to each.  
 He looks not like the common breed  
 That with the napkin dally ;  
 I think he came like Ganymede,  
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And cramm'd a plumper crop ;  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley.



A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw  
A something-pottle-bodied boy  
That knuckled at the taw :  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and  
good,  
Flew over roof and casement :  
His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
And follow'd with acclaims,  
A sign to many a staring shire  
Came crowing over Thames.  
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks !  
'Tis but a steward of the can,  
One shade more plump than common ;  
As just and mere a serving-man  
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
Into the common day ?  
Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
Which I shall have to pay ?  
For, something duller than at first,  
Nor wholly comfortable,  
I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
I take myself to task ;  
Lest of the fulness of my life  
I leave an empty flask :  
For I had hope, by something rare,  
To prove myself a poet :  
But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
Till they be gather'd up ;  
The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
Will haunt the vacant cup :

And others' follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;  
And most, of sterling worth, is what  
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
We know not what we know.  
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone ;  
'Tis gone, and let it go.  
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipt  
Away from my embraces,  
And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more ;  
With peals of genial clamour sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters ;  
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
Had yet their native glow :  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show ;  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
He flash'd his random speeches,  
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
Like all good things on earth !  
For should I prize thee, couldst thou  
last,  
At half thy real worth ?  
I hold it good, good things should pass :  
With time I will not quarrel :  
It is but yonder empty glass  
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
To which I most resort,  
I too must part : I hold thee dear  
For this good pint of port.  
For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots :  
 Thy latter days increased with pence  
 Go down among the pots :  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot ;  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot ;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies ;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes :  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more ;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven :  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,  
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

### LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they :  
 They two will wed the morrow morn :  
 God's blessing on the day !

'He does not love me for my birth,  
 Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;  
 He loves me for my own true worth,  
 And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
 Said, 'Who was this that went from  
 thee ?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,  
 'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd !' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'That all comes round so just and fair :  
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
 And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,  
 my nurse ?'

Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so  
 wild ?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,  
 'I speak the truth : you are my child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at my  
 breast ;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread !  
 I buried her like my own sweet child,  
 And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,  
 To keep the best man under the sun  
 So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'But keep the secret for your life,  
 And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,  
 When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,  
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
 Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
 And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'But keep the secret all ye can.'  
 She said, 'Not so : but I will know  
 If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith ?' said Alice the  
 nurse,

'The man will cleave unto his right.'  
 'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,  
 'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !  
 Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'  
 'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,  
 'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
 My mother dear, if this be so,  
 And lay your hand upon my head,  
 And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
 She was no longer Lady Clare :  
 She went by dale, and she went by down,  
 With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
 brought  
 Leapt up from where she lay,  
 Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
 And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :  
 'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !  
 Why come you drest like a village maid,  
 That are the flower of the earth ?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,  
 I am but as my fortunes are :  
 I am a beggar born,' she said,  
 'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'For I am yours in word and in deed.  
 Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,  
 'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up !  
 Her heart within her did not fail :  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn :  
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she  
 stood :

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—'

'If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

## THE CAPTAIN

## A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

HE that only rules by terror  
 Doeth grievous wrong.  
 Deep as Hell I count his error.  
 Let him hear my song.  
 Brave the Captain was : the seamen  
 Made a gallant crew,  
 Gallant sons of English freemen,  
 Sailors bold and true.  
 But they hated his oppression,  
 Stern he was and rash ;  
 So for every light transgression  
 Doom'd them to the lash.  
 Day by day more harsh and cruel  
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
 Burnt in each man's blood.  
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
 Hoped to make the name  
 Of his vessel great in story,  
 Wheresoe'er he came.  
 So they past by capes and islands,  
 Many a harbour-mouth,  
 Sailing under palmy highlands  
 Far within the South.  
 On a day when they were going  
 O'er the lone expanse,  
 In the north, her canvas flowing,  
 Rose a ship of France.  
 Then the Captain's colour heighten'd,  
 Joyful came his speech :  
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
 In the eyes of each.  
 'Chase,' he said : the ship flew forward,  
 And the wind did blow ;  
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
 Till she near'd the foe.  
 Then they look'd at him they hated,  
 Had what they desired :  
 Mute with folded arms they waited—  
 Not a gun was fired.  
 But they heard the foeman's thunder  
 Roaring out their doom ;  
 All the air was torn in sunder,  
 Crashing went the boom,

Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
 Bullets fell like rain ;  
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
 Blood and brains of men.  
 Spars were splinter'd ; decks were broken :  
 Every mother's son—  
 Down they dropt—no word was spoken—  
 Each beside his gun.  
 On the decks as they were lying,  
 Were their faces grim.  
 In their blood, as they lay dying,  
 Did they smile on him.  
 Those, in whom he had reliance  
 For his noble name,  
 With one smile of still defiance  
 Sold him unto shame.  
 Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
 Pale he turn'd and red,  
 Till himself was deadly wounded  
 Falling on the dead.  
 Dismal error ! fearful slaughter !  
 Years have wander'd by,  
 Side by side beneath the water  
 Crew and Captain lie ;  
 There the sunlit ocean tosses  
 O'er them mouldering,  
 And the lonely seabird crosses  
 With one waft of the wing.

### THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,  
 ' If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
 And I think thou lov'st me well.'  
 She replies, in accents fainter,  
 ' There is none I love like thee.'  
 He is but a landscape-painter,  
 And a village maiden she.  
 He to lips, that fondly falter,  
 Presses his without reproof :  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
 And they leave her father's roof.  
 ' I can make no marriage present :  
 Little can I give my wife.  
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
 And I love thee more than life.'  
 They by parks and lodges going  
 See the lordly castles stand :

Summer woods, about them blowing,  
 Made a murmur in the land.  
 From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 ' Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'  
 So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers ;  
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great,  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 Built for pleasure and for state.  
 All he shows her makes him dearer :  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they twain will spend their days.  
 O but she will love him truly !  
 He shall have a cheerful home ;  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When beneath his roof they come.  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns ;  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before :  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door.  
 And they speak in gentle murmur,  
 When they answer to his call,  
 While he treads with footstep firmer,  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 ' All of this is mine and thine.'  
 Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he.  
 All at once the colour flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within.  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove :  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.

So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank :  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
 To all duties of her rank :  
 And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much.  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burthen of an honour  
 Unto which she was not born.  
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-painter,  
 Which did win my heart from me !'  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side :  
 Three fair children first she bore him,  
 Then before her time she died.  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pacing down,  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed.'  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest.

## THE VOYAGE

## I

We left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbour-mouth ;  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the South :  
 How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore !  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

## II

Warm broke the breeze against the  
 brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :

The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the  
 gale.

The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind ; so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

## III

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

## IV

New stars all night above the brim  
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
 Changed every moment as we flew.  
 Far ran the naked moon across  
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
 Or flying shone, the silver boss  
 Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

## V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
 High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
 We past long lines of Northern capes  
 And dewy Northern meadows green.  
 We came to warmer waves, and deep  
 Across the boundless east we drove,  
 Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
 brine  
 With ashy rains, that spreading made  
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;  
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !  
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;  
 At times a carven craft would shoot  
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
 With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
 But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled  
 Down the waste waters day and night,  
 And still we follow'd where she led,  
 In hope to gain upon her flight.  
 Her face was evermore unseen,  
 And fixt upon the far sea-line ;  
 But each man murmur'd, ' O my Queen,  
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

## IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
 Like Fancy made of golden air,  
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
 Now high on waves that idly burst  
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the  
 sea,  
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X

And only one among us—him  
 We pleased not—he was seldom  
 pleased :  
 He saw not far : his eyes were dim :  
 But ours he swore were all diseased.  
 ' A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,  
 ' A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and  
 wept.  
 And overboard one stormy night  
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd,  
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;  
 We lov'd the glories of the world,  
 But laws of nature were our scorn.

For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
 But whence were those that drove the  
 sail

Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,  
 And to and thro' the counter gale ?

## XII

Again to colder climes we came,  
 For still we follow'd where she led :  
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
 And half the crew are sick or dead,  
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,  
 We follow that which flies before :  
 We know the merry world is round,  
 And we may sail for evermore.

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

## A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
 With tears and smiles from heaven again  
 The maiden Spring upon the plain  
 Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere  
 Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
 And far, in forest-deeps unseen,  
 The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
 Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :  
 Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
 Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :  
 By grassy capes with fuller sound

In curves the yellowing river ran,  
 And drooping chestnut-buds began  
 To spread into the perfect fan,  
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
 Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
 Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,  
 With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :  
 A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
 Buckled with golden clasps before ;  
 A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
 Closed in a golden ring.



Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
 Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
 In mosses mixt with violet  
 Her cream-white mule his pastern set :  
     And fleetier now she skimm'd the  
     plains  
 Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
 By night to eery warblings,  
 When all the glimmering moorland rings  
     With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,  
 The happy winds upon her play'd,  
 Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
 She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
     The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
 A man had given all other bliss,  
 And all his worldly worth for this,  
 To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
     Upon her perfect lips.

### A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
 Thy tribute wave deliver :  
 No more by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
 A rivulet then a river :  
 No where by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
 And here thine aspen shiver ;  
 And here by thee will hum the bee,  
 For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
 A thousand moons will quiver ;  
 But not by thee my steps shall be,  
 For ever and for ever.

### THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
 She was more fair than words can say :  
 Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
 Before the king Cophetua.

In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
 To meet and greet her on her way ;  
 'It is no wonder,' said the lords,  
     'She is more beautiful than day.'  
 As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
 She in her poor attire was seen :  
 One praised her ancles, one her eyes,  
     One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
 In all that land had never been :  
 Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
     'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

### THE EAGLE

#### FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands ;  
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
 Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
 He watches from his mountain walls,  
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
 Yon orange sunset waning slow :  
 From fringes of the faded eve,  
 O, happy planet, eastward go ;  
 Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
 Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
 To glass herself in dewy eyes  
 That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
 Dip forward under starry light,  
 And move me to my marriage-morn,  
 And round again to happy night.

COME not, when I am dead,  
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my  
     grave,  
 To trample round my fallen head,  
 And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst  
     not save.  
 There let the wind sweep and the plover  
     cry ;  
     But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
 I care no longer, being all unblest :  
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of  
 Time,  
 And I desire to rest.  
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where  
 I lie :  
 Go by, go by.

## THE LETTERS

### I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
 And saw the altar cold and bare.  
 A clog of lead was round my feet,  
 A band of pain across my brow ;  
 'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
 Before you hear my marriage vow.'

### II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
 That mock'd the wholesome human  
 heart,  
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
 We met, but only meant to part.  
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;  
 I saw with half-unconscious eye  
 She wore the colours I approved.

### III

She took the little ivory chest,  
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
 And gave my letters back to me.  
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
 please ;  
 As looks a father on the things  
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

### IV

She told me all her friends had said ;  
 I raged against the public liar ;  
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
 But in my words were seeds of fire.

'No more of love ; your sex is known :  
 I never will be twice deceived.  
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
 The woman cannot be believed.

### V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—  
 And women's slander is the worst,  
 And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst.' :  
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
 I shook her breast with vague alarms—  
 Like torrents from a mountain source  
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

### VI

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
 And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
 As homeward by the church I drew.  
 The very graves appear'd to smile,  
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;  
 'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,  
 There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

## THE VISION OF SIN

### I

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
 A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would  
 have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
 And from the palace came a child of sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should arise :  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and  
 capes—  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
 shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,  
 and piles of grapes.

### II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower ground ;

Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
 Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
 Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,  
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;

Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
 Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;  
 Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,

As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
 The strong tempestuous treble throb'd  
 and palpitated ;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
 Flung the torrent rainbow round :

Then they started from their places,  
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
 Half-invisible to the view,

Wheeling with precipitate paces  
 To the melody, till they flew,

Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,

Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
 Dash'd together in blinding dew :

Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
 The nerve-dissolving melody

Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-  
 tract,

That girt the region with high cliff and  
 lawn :

I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,  
 Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
 From those still heights, and, slowly  
 drawing near,

A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
 Came floating on for many a month and  
 year,

Unheeded : and I thought I would have  
 spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew too  
 late :

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine  
 was broken,

When that cold vapour touch'd the palace  
 gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my head  
 A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as  
 death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

## IV

' Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !

Here is custom come your way ;

Take my brute, and lead him in,

Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

' Bitter barmaid, waning fast !

See that sheets are on my bed ;

What ! the flower of life is past :

It is long before you wed.

' Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,

At the Dragon on the heath !

Let us have a quiet hour,

Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

' I am old, but let me drink ;

Bring me spices, bring me wine ;

I remember, when I think,

That my youth was half divine.

' Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,

When a-blanket wraps the day,

When the rotten woodland drips,

And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

' Sit thee down, and have no shame,

Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :

What care I for any name ?

What for order or degree ?

' Let me screw thee up a peg :

Let me loose thy tongue with wine :

Callest thou that thing a leg ?

Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

' Thou shalt not be saved by works :

Thou hast been a sinner too :

Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,

Empty scarecrows, I and you !

'Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood ;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
Thro' the courts, the camps, the  
schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship !—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack !  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue !—to be good and just—  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O ! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave :  
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new ;  
She is of an ancient house :  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State :  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

'Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

'Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

'You are bones, and what of that?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip:  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed:  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath!  
Drink to heavy Ignorance!  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near:  
What! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!  
Dregs of life, and lees of man:  
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

## v

The voice grew faint: there came a  
further change:

Once more uprose the mystic mountain-  
range:

Below were men and horses pierced with  
worms,

And slowly quickening into lower forms;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of  
dross,

Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd  
with moss.

Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was  
a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with  
time.'

Another said: 'The crime of sense  
became

The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'

And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd  
his power;

A little grain of conscience made him  
sour.'

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'  
To which an answer peal'd from that high  
land,

But in a tongue no man could understand;  
And on the glimmering limit far with-  
drawn

God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

## TO —

## AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
Of those that wear the Poet's crown:  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not show:  
Break lock and seal: betray the trust:  
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just  
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth ;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown and  
 knave  
 Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier,  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
 For whom the carrion vulture waits  
 To tear his heart before the crowd !

### TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
 The long divine Peneian pass,  
 The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
 With such a pencil, such a pen,  
 You shadow forth to distant men,  
 I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
 And track'd you still on classic ground,  
 I grew in gladness till I found  
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
 And glisten'd—here and there alone  
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
 thrown  
 By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
 Of cavern pillars ; on the swell  
 The silver lily heaved and fell ;  
 And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
 By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
 To him who sat upon the rocks,  
 And fluted to the morning sea.

BREAK, break, break,  
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !  
 And I would that my tongue could utter  
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
 That he shouts with his sister at play !  
 O well for the sailor lad,  
 That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
 To their haven under the hill ;  
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
 And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,  
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
 Will never come back to me.

### THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
 He pass'd by the town and out of the  
 street,  
 A light wind blew from the gates of the  
 sun,  
 And waves of shadow went over the  
 wheat,  
 And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
 And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
 That made the wild-swan pause in her  
 cloud,  
 And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
 The snake slipt under a spray,  
 The wild hawk stood with the down on  
 his beak,  
 And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
 And the nightingale thought, 'I have  
 sung many songs,  
 But never a one so gay,  
 For he sings of what the world will be  
 When the years have died away.'



# ENOCH ARDEN

## AND OTHER POEMS

### ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a  
chasm ;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
sands ;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf  
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ; and  
higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
mill ;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray down  
With Danish barrows ; and a hazelwood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a wintershipwreck, play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-  
drawn ;  
And built their castles of dissolving sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or following up  
And flying the white breaker, daily left  
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff :  
In this the children play'd at keeping  
house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
While Annie still was mistress ; but at  
times  
Enoch would hold possession for a week :  
'This is my house and this my little wife.'  
'Mine too' said Philip 'turn and turn  
about :'  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-  
made

Was master : then would Philip, his blue  
eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
tears,  
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at  
this  
The little wife would weep for company,  
And pray them not to quarrel for her  
sake,  
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood  
past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascending  
sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl ; and Enoch spoke his  
love,  
But Philip loved in silence ; and the girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him ;  
But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew it  
not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make a  
home  
For Annie : and so prosper'd that at last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten  
coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a  
year  
On board a merchantman, and made  
himself  
Full sailor ; and he thrice had pluck'd a  
life  
From the dread sweep of the down-stream-  
ing seas :  
And all men look'd upon him favourably :  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth  
May

He purchased his own boat, and made a home  
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up  
 The narrow street that clamber'd toward  
 the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
 The younger people making holiday,  
 With bag and sack and basket, great and small,  
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd  
 (His father lying sick and needing him)  
 An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood  
 began  
 To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,  
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,  
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face  
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,  
 And in their eyes and faces read his doom;  
 Then, as their faces drew together,  
 groan'd,  
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded life  
 Crept down into the hollows of the wood;  
 There, while the rest were loud in merry-  
 making,  
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and  
 past  
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang  
 the bells,  
 And merrily ran the years, seven happy  
 years,  
 Seven happy years of health and com-  
 petence,  
 And mutual love and honourable toil;  
 With children; first a daughter. In him  
 woke,  
 With his first babe's first cry, the noble  
 wish  
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
 And give his child a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been, or hers; a wish re-  
 new'd,  
 When two years after came a boy to be  
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,

While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
 Or often journeying landward; for in truth  
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-  
 spoil

In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter  
 gales,

Not only to the market-cross were known,  
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,  
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minister-  
 ing.

Then came a change, as all things  
 human change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used  
 Enoch at times to go by land or sea;  
 And once when there, and clambering on  
 a mast

In harbour, by mischance he slipt and  
 fell:

A limb was broken when they lifted  
 him;

And while he lay recovering there, his  
 wife

Bore him another son, a sickly one:  
 Another hand crept too across his trade  
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on him  
 fell,

Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing  
 man,

Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
 To see his children leading evermore  
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
 And her, he loved, a beggar: then he  
 pray'd

'Save them from this, whatever comes to  
 me.'

And while he pray'd, the master of that  
 ship

Enoch had served in, hearing his mis-  
 chance,

Came, for he knew the man and valued  
 him,

Reporting of his vessel China-bound,  
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would  
 he go?

There yet were many weeks before she  
sail'd,  
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch  
have the place?  
And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance  
appear'd  
No graver than as when some little cloud  
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
And isles a light in the offing: yet the  
wife—  
When he was gone—the children—what  
to do?  
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his  
plans;  
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her  
well—  
How many a rough sea had he weather'd  
in her!  
He knew her, as a horseman knows his  
horse—  
And yet to sell her—then with what she  
brought  
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth  
in trade  
With all that seamen needed or their  
wives—  
So might she keep the house while he  
was gone.  
Should he not trade himself out yonder?  
go  
This voyage more than once? yea twice  
or thrice—  
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,  
Become the master of a larger craft,  
With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
And pass his days in peace among his  
own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:  
Then moving homeward came on Annie  
pale,  
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
Forward she started with a happy cry,  
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;  
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his  
limbs,

Appraised his weight and fondled father-  
like,  
But had no heart to break his purposes  
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring  
had girt  
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:  
Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd  
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)  
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
For her or his dear children, not to go.  
He not for his own self caring but her,  
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;  
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-  
friend,  
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set  
his hand  
To fit their little streetward sitting-room  
With shelf and corner for the goods and  
stores.  
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and  
axe,  
Anger and saw, while Annie seem'd to  
hear  
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful  
hand,—  
The space was narrow,—having order'd  
all  
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs  
Her blossom or her seedling, paused;  
and he,  
Who needs would work for Annie to the  
last,  
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of fare-  
well  
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,  
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to  
him.  
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery

Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,

Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes  
Whatever came to him : and then he said  
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God  
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.

Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,  
For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
know it.'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle 'and  
he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—  
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—  
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees  
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,  
And make him merry, when I come home  
again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,

And almost hoped herself ; but when he  
turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven, she  
heard,

Heard and not heard him ; as the village  
girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you  
are wise ;

And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look  
on yours.

Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
(He named the day) get you a seaman's  
glass,

Spy out my face, and laugh at all your  
fears.'

But when the last of those last moments  
came,

'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come again

Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.  
And fear no more for me ; or if you fear  
Cast all your cares on God ; that anchor  
holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning ? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him ? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His : He made it.'

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his drooping  
wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones ;  
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept  
After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
When Annie would have raised him  
Enoch said

'Wake him not ; let him sleep ; how  
should the child

Remember this ?' and kiss'd him in his  
cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt  
A tiny curl, and gave it : this he kept  
Thro' all his future ; but now hastily  
caught

His bundle, waved his hand, and went  
his way.

She when the day, that Enoch  
mention'd, came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain : perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye ;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous ;  
She saw him not : and while he stood on  
deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel past,

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for  
him ;

Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his  
grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with his,  
But throve not in her trade, not being bred  
To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch  
say ?'

For more than once, in days of difficulty

And pressure, had she sold her wares for  
less  
Than what she gave in buying what she  
sold :  
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it ; and  
thus,  
Expectant of that news which never came,  
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,  
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born  
and grew  
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it  
With all a mother's care : nevertheless,  
Whether her business often call'd her from  
it,  
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,  
Or means to pay the voice who best could  
tell  
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,  
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—  
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried  
it,  
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her  
peace  
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon  
her),  
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.  
'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,  
May be some little comfort ;' therefore  
went,  
Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
Enter'd ; but Annie, seated with her grief,  
Fresh from the burial of her little one,  
Cared not to look on any human face,  
But turn'd her own toward the wall and  
wept.  
Then Philip standing up said falteringly  
'Annie, I came to ask a favour of you.'

He spoke ; the passion in her moan'd  
reply  
'Favour from one so sad and so forlorn  
As I am !' half abash'd him ; yet unask'd,  
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
He set himself beside her, saying to her :

'I came to speak to you of what he  
wish'd,  
Enoch, your husband : I have ever said  
You chose the best among us—a strong  
man :  
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand  
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.  
And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
And leave you lonely ? not to see the  
world—  
For pleasure ?—nay, but for the where-  
withal  
To give his babes a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or yours : that was  
his wish.  
And if he come again, vext will he be  
To find the precious morning hours were  
lost.  
And it would vex him even in his grave,  
If he could know his babes were running  
wild  
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,  
now—  
Have we not known each other all our  
lives ?  
I do beseech you by the love you bear  
Him and his children not to say me nay—  
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,  
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.  
Now let me put the boy and girl to school :  
This is the favour that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the  
wall  
Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face ;  
I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
When you came in my sorrow broke me  
down ;  
And now I think your kindness breaks  
me down ;  
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on me :  
He will repay you : money can be repaid ;  
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd  
'Then you will let me, Annie ?'

There she turn'd,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon  
him,

And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
 Then calling down a blessing on his head  
 Caught at his hand, and wrung it passion-  
     ately,  
 And past into the little garth beyond.  
 So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to  
 school,  
 And bought them needful books, and  
 every way,  
 Like one who does his duty by his own,  
 Made himself theirs ; and tho' for Annie's  
     sake,  
 Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
 He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
 And seldom crost her threshold, yet he  
     sent  
 Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and  
 fruit,  
 The late and early roses from his wall,  
 Or conies from the down, and now and  
     then,  
 With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
 To save the offence of charitable, flour  
 From his tall mill that whistled on the  
     waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's  
 mind :  
 Scarce could the woman when he came  
     upon her,  
 Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
 Light on a broken word to thank him  
     with.  
 But Philip was her children's all-in-all ;  
 From distant corners of the street they  
     ran  
 To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;  
 Lords of his house and of his mill were  
     they ;  
 Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
 Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with  
     him  
 And call'd him Father Philip. Philip  
     gain'd  
 As Enoch lost ; for Enoch seem'd to them  
 Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
 Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
 Down at the far end of an avenue,

Going we know not where : and so ten  
     years,  
 Since Enoch left his hearth and native  
     land,  
 Fled forward, and no news of Enoch  
     came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children  
     long'd  
 To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
 And Annie would go with them ; then  
     they begg'd  
 For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too :  
 Him, like the working bee in blossom-  
     dust,  
 Blanch'd with his mill, they found ; and  
     saying to him  
 ' Come with us Father Philip ' he denied ;  
 But when the children pluck'd at him to  
     go,  
 He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their  
     wish,  
 For was not Annie with them ? and they  
     went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood  
     began  
 To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
 Fail'd her ; and sighing, ' Let me rest ' she  
     said :  
 So Philip rested with her well-content ;  
 While all the younger ones with jubilant  
     cries  
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a  
     plunge  
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent  
     or broke  
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
 And calling, here and there, about the  
     wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark  
     hour  
 Here in this wood, when like a wounded  
     life  
 He crept into the shadow : at last he said,



Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen,  
Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in the  
wood.  
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a  
word.  
'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon her  
hands;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship  
was lost !  
No more of that ! why should you kill  
yourself  
And make them orphans quite?' And  
Annie said  
'I thought not of it : but—I know not  
why—  
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer  
spoke.  
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so long,  
That tho' I know not when it first came  
there,  
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
That he who left you ten long years ago  
Should still be living ; well then—let me  
speak :  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :  
I cannot help you as I wish to do  
Unless—they say that women are so  
quick—  
Perhaps you know what I would have  
you know—  
I wish you for my wife. I fain would  
prove  
A father to your children : I do think  
They love me as a father : I am sure  
That I love them as if they were mine  
own ;  
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
That after all these sad uncertain years,  
We might be still as happy as God  
grants  
To any of his creatures. Think upon it :  
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
No burthen, save my care for you and  
yours :

And we have known each other all our  
lives,  
And I have loved you longer than you  
know.'

Then answer'd Annie ; tenderly she  
spoke :  
'You have been as God's good angel in  
our house.  
God bless you for it, God reward you for  
it,  
Philip, with something happier than my-  
self.  
Can one love twice ? can you be ever  
loved  
As Enoch was ? what is it that you ask ?'  
'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved  
A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,  
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a  
while :  
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not  
come—  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :  
O wait a little !' Philip sadly said  
'Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay' she  
cried  
'I am bound : you have my promise—in  
a year :  
Will you not bide your year as I bide  
mine ?'  
And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my  
year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip  
glancing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day  
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead ;  
Then fearing night and chill for Annie,  
rose  
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the  
wood.  
Up came the children laden with their  
spoil ;  
Then all descended to the port, and there  
At Annie's door he paused and gave his  
hand,  
Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to  
you,

That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,  
I am always bound to you, but you are free.'

Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,  
While yet she went about her household ways,

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,  
That he had loved her longer than she knew,

That autumn into autumn flash'd again,  
And there he stood once more before her face,

Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.

'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe again: Come out and see.' But she—she put him off—

So much to look to—such a change—a month—

Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—

A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice  
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,  
'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'

And Annie could have wept for pity of him;

And yet she held him on delayingly  
With many a scarce-believable excuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,  
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;

Some that she but held off to draw him on;  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,  
As simple folk that knew not their own minds,

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her own son

Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;  
But evermore the daughter prest upon her  
To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty;  
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew  
Careworn and wan; and all these things  
fell on her  
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?'  
Then compass'd round by the blind wall  
of night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,

Started from bed, and struck herself a light,

Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her:

No meaning there: she closed the Book  
and slept:

When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:  
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy,  
he is singing

Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms

Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
"Hosanna in the highest!" Here she  
woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him

'There is no reason why we should not wed.'

'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both  
our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.

A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,

She knew not whence ; a whisper on her  
ear,

She knew not what ; nor loved she to be left  
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.

What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd,  
often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
Fearing to enter : Philip thought he knew :  
Such doubts and fears were common to  
her state,

Being with child : but when her child was  
born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,  
Then the new mother came about her  
heart,

Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch ? prosperously  
sail'd

The ship ' Good Fortune,' tho' at setting  
forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unwept  
She slept across the summer of the world,  
Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world again,  
The breath of heaven came continually  
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and  
bought

Quaint monsters for the market of those  
times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage : at first  
indeed

Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,  
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head  
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her  
bows :

Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
variable,

Then baffling, a long course of them ; and  
last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless  
heavens

Till hard upon the cry of ' breakers ' came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the  
night,

Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken  
spars,

These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing  
roots ;

Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge  
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of  
palm, a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern. So the  
three,

Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than  
boy,

Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
wreck,

Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-  
life.

They could not leave him. After he was  
gone,

The two remaining found a fallen stem ;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's warn-  
ing ' wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the  
lawns

And winding glades high up like ways to  
Heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of  
plumes,

The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses

That coil'd around the stately stems, and  
ran

Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,  
All these he saw ; but what he fain had  
seen

He could not see, the kindly human face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on the  
reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees that  
branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or all day  
long

Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail :  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;  
The blaze upon the waters to the east ;  
The blaze upon his island overhead ;  
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;  
Then the great stars that globed them-  
selves in Heaven,

The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to  
watch,

So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
A phantom made of many phantoms  
moved

Before him haunting him, or he himself  
Moved haunting people, things and places,  
known

Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;  
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small  
house,

The climbing street, the mill, the leafy  
lanes,

The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,  
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the  
chill

November dawns and dewy-glooming  
downs,

The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
leaves,

And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his  
ears,

Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;

Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started  
up

Shuddering, and when the beauteous  
hateful isle

Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being every-  
where

Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem  
all alone,

Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
The sunny and rainy seasons came and  
went

Year after year. His hopes to see his own,  
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
doom

Came suddenly to an end. Another ship  
(She wanted water) blown by baffling  
winds,

Like the Good Fortune, from her destined  
course,

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where  
she lay :

For since the mate had seen at early dawn  
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle  
The silent water slipping from the hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst away  
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the  
shores

With clamour. Downward from his  
mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,  
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely  
clad,

Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it  
seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
They knew not what : and yet he led the  
way

To where the rivulets of sweet water ran ;  
And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-bounden  
tongue

Was loosen'd, till he made them under-  
stand ;

Whom, when their casks were fill'd they  
took aboard :

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,

Scarce-credited at first but more and more,  
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:  
And clothes they gave him and free passage home;

But oft he work'd among the rest and shook

His isolation from him. None of these  
Came from his country, or could answer him,

If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.

And dull the voyage was with long delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore

His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath

Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:  
And that same morning officers and men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,  
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:  
Then moving up the coast they landed him,  
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,  
But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?

His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,

Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,

Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;

Cut off the length of highway on before,  
And left but narrow breadth to left and right

Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped  
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:

Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light  
- Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,

His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes

In those far-off seven happy years were born;

But finding neither light nor murmur there  
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept

Still downward thinking 'dead or dead to me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,

Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone

Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,

With daily-dwindling profits held the house;

A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now  
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.  
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,

Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the port,  
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,

So broken—all the story of his house.  
His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth

Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance

No shadow past, nor motion: any one,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale

Less than the teller: only when she closed  
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost'



He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost';  
Again in deeper inward whispers 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face  
again;

'If I might look on her sweet face again  
And know that she is happy.' So the  
thought

Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
him forth,

At evening when the dull November day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.  
There he sat down gazing on all below;  
There did a thousand memories roll upon  
him,

Unspeakable for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
house,

Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures  
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes  
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,

The latest house to landward: but be-  
hind,

With one small gate that open'd on the  
waste,

Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd:

And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:

But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and  
stole

Up by the wall, behind the yew; and  
thence

That which he better might have shunn'd,  
if griefs

Like his have worse or better, Enoch  
saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board

Sparkled and shone; so genial was the  
hearth:

And on the right hand of the hearth he  
saw

Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,

Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
knees;

And o'er her second father stooped a girl,  
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted  
hand

Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy  
arms,

Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
laugh'd:

And on the left hand of the hearth he saw  
The mother glancing often toward her  
babe,

But turning now and then to speak with  
him,

Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,

And saying that which pleased him, for  
he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life  
beheld

His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
babe

Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,  
And all the warmth, the peace, the  
happiness,

And his own children tall and beautiful,  
And him, that other, reigning in his place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love,—

Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him  
all,

Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,

Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch,  
and fear'd

To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast of  
doom,

Would shatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate under-  
foot,

And feeling all along the garden-wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be  
found,



Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?

O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
My children too! must I not speak to these?

They know me not. I should betray myself.

Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
Prayer from a living source within the will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's wife'  
He said to Miriam 'that you spoke about,  
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?'

'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam, 'fear enow!

If you could tell her you had seen him dead,

Why, that would be her comfort;' and he thought

'After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,

I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.

Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stinted commerce of those days;

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:  
Yet since he did but labour for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life in it

Whereby the man could live; and as the year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the day  
When Enoch had return'd, a langour came

Upon him; gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life approach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kinder hope

On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,  
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last.'  
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said  
'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,  
Before I tell you—swear upon the book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'

'Dead,' clamour'd the good woman, 'hear him talk !

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'

'Swear' added Enoch sternly 'on the book.'

And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her, 'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'

'Know him?' she said 'I knew him far away.

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street ;

Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her ; 'His head is low, and no man cares for him.

I think I have not three days more to live ; I am the man.' At which the woman gave A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.

'You Arden, you ! nay,—sure he was a foot

Higher than you be.' Enoch said again 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am ;

My grief and solitude have broken me ; Nevertheless, know you that I am he Who married—but that name has twice been changed—

I married her who married Philip Ray. Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,

His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back, His gazing in on Annie, his resolve, And how he kept it. As the woman heard,

Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears, While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly To rush abroad all round the little haven, Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes ; But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,

Saying only 'See your bairns before you go ! Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung

A moment on her words, but then replied :

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last,

But let me hold my purpose till I die.

Sit down again ; mark me and understand, While I have power to speak. I charge you now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died Blessing her, praying for her, loving her ; Save for the bar between us, loving her As when she laid her head beside my own. And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw So like her mother, that my latest breath Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.

And tell my son that I died blessing him. And say to Philip that I blest him too ; He never meant us any thing but good. But if my children care to see me dead, Who hardly knew me living, let them come,

I am their father ; but she must not come, For my dead face would vex her after-life. And now there is but one of all my blood Who will embrace me in the world-to-be : This hair is his : she cut it off and gave it, And I have borne it with me all these years,

And thought to bear it with me to my grave ;

But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,

My babe in bliss : wherefore when I am gone,

Take, give her this, for it may comfort her :

It will moreover be a token to her, That I am he.'

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane Made such a voluble answer promising all, That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her

Repeating all he wish'd, and once again She promised.

Then the third night after this, While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,

And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang.  
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
abroad  
Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a sail!  
I am saved;' and so fell back and spoke  
no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
And when they buried him the little port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

## THE BROOK

'HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to  
the East  
And he for Italy—too late—too late:  
One whom the strong sons of the world  
despise;  
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and  
share,  
And mellow metres more than cent for  
cent;  
Nor could he understand how money  
breeds,  
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself  
could make  
The thing that is not as the thing that  
is.  
O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we  
say,  
Of those that held their heads above the  
crowd,  
They flourish'd then or then; but life in  
him  
Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
touch'd  
On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist of  
green,  
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he  
loved,  
For which, in branding summers of  
Bengal,  
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry  
air  
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
To me that loved him; for "O brook,"  
he says,

"O babbling brook," says Edmund in  
his rhyme,  
"Whence come you?" and the brook,  
why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite  
worn out,  
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley  
bridge,  
It has more ivy; there the river; and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook and  
river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook  
or bird;  
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer  
grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

‘O darling Katie Willows, his one  
child !  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not  
coarse ;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

‘Sweet Katie, once I did her a good  
turn,  
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and heart  
with her.

For here I came, twenty years back—the  
week

Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost  
By that old bridge which, half in ruins  
then,

Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,  
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
And push’d at Philip’s garden-gate. The  
gate,

Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,

Stuck ; and he clamour’d from a case-  
ment, “Run”

To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
“Run, Katie !” Katie never ran : she  
moved

To meet me, winding under woodbine  
bowers,

A little flutter’d, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

‘What was it ? less of sentiment than

RETRIC

Had Katie ; not illiterate ; nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth’d philan-  
thropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the  
Deed.

‘She told me. She and James had  
quarrell’d. Why ?

What cause of quarrel ? None, she said,  
no cause ;

James had no cause : but when I prest  
the cause,

I learnt that James had flickering jea-  
lousies

Which anger’d her. Who anger’d James ?  
I said.

But Katie snatch’d her eyes at once from  
mine,

And sketching with her slender pointed  
foot

Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim’d, in flushing silence, till I ask’d  
If James were coming. “Coming every  
day,”

She answer’d, “ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke  
him short ;

And James departed vext with him and  
her.”

How could I help her ? “Would I—was  
it wrong ?”

(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she  
spoke)

“O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me !”  
And even while she spoke, I saw where  
James

Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-  
sweet.

‘O Katie, what I suffer’d for your sake !  
For in I went, and call’d old Philip out  
To show the farm : full willingly he rose :  
He led me thro’ the short sweet-smelling  
lanes

Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his  
machines ;

He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs,  
his dogs ;

He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-  
hens ;

His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own  
deserts :

Then from the plaintive mother's teat he  
took

Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming  
each,

And naming those, his friends, for whom  
they were :

Then crost the common into Darnley  
chase

To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse  
and fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.

Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed<sup>o</sup> out a pasturing colt, and  
said :

"That was the four-year-old I sold the  
Squire."

And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at  
grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter  
wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he  
ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was  
mad,

But he stood firm ; and so the matter  
hung ;

He gave them line : and five days after  
that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd something  
more,

But he stood firm ; and so the matter  
hung ;

He knew the man ; the colt would fetch  
its price ;

He gave them line : and how by chance  
at last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)

He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew  
him in,

And there he mellow'd all his heart with  
ale,

Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of  
haven, he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-  
menced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the  
Jilt,

Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,

And with me Philip, talking still ; and so  
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling

sun,

And following our own shadows thrice  
as long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
door,

Arrived and found the sun of sweet con-  
tent

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things  
well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers ;

I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows ;

I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses ;

I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,

For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these  
are gone,

All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund,  
sleeps,

Not by the well-known stream and rustic  
spire,

But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,

Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of  
words

Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :

I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in April-autumns. All are  
gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his  
mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the  
brook

A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a  
low breath

Of tender air made tremble in the  
hedge

The fragile bindweed-bells and briony  
rings ;

And he look'd up. There stood a maiden  
near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he  
stared

On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the  
shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit with-  
in :

Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you  
from the farm?'

'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little :  
pardon me ;

What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That  
were strange.

What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No !'  
'That is my name.'

'Indeed !' and here he look'd so self-  
perplexed,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd,  
till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he  
wakes,

Who feels a glimmering strangeness in  
his dream.

Then looking at her ; 'Too happy, fresh  
and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best  
bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your  
name

About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie,  
'we came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her? so they said on board.  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come  
with me.

My brother James is in the harvest-field :  
But she—you will be welcome—O, come  
in !'

## AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

DUST are our frames ; and, gilded dust,  
our pride

Looks only for a moment whole and  
sound ;

Like that long-buried body of the king,  
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,  
Which at a touch of light, an air of  
heaven,

Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape  
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I  
saw

Sunning himself in a waste field alone—  
Old, and a mine of memories—who had  
served,

Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,  
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty  
man,

The county God—in whose capacious  
hall,

Hung with a hundred shields, the family  
tree

Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
king—

Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the  
spire,

Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-  
gates

And swang besides on many a windy  
sign—

Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head



Saw from his windows nothing save his  
own—

What lovelier of his own had he than  
her,

His only child, his Edith, whom he loved  
As heiress and not heir regretfully?

But 'he that marries her marries her  
name'

This fiat somewhat soothed himself and  
wife,

His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
Inspid as the Queen upon a card;

Her all of thought and bearing hardly  
more

Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled  
corn,

Little about it stirring save a brook!

A sleepy land, where under the same  
wheel

The same old rut would deepen year by  
year;

Where almost all the village had one  
name;

Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the  
Hall

And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,

Bound in an immemorial intimacy,  
Were open to each other; tho' to dream

That Love could bind them closer well  
had made

The hoar hair of the Baronet-bristle up  
With horror, worse than had he heard

his priest  
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men

Daughters of God; so sleepy was the  
land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
it so,

Somewhere beneath his own low range  
of roofs,

Have also set his many-shielded tree?  
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage

once.  
When the red rose was redder than itself,

And York's white rose as red as Lan-  
caster's,

With wounded peace which each had  
prick'd to death.

'Not proven' Averill said, or laughingly  
'Some other race of Averills'—prov'n

or no,  
What cared he? what, if other or the

same?

He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.  
But Leolin, his brother, living oft

With Averill, and a year or two before  
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away

By one low voice to one dear neighbour-  
hood,

Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
claim

A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
That shook the heart of Edith hearing

him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue  
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom

Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,  
that still

Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
beam'd,

Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,  
Their best and brightest, when they dwelt

on hers,  
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,

But subject to the season or the mood,  
Shone like a mystic star between the less

And greater glory varying to and fro,  
We know not wherefore; bounteously

made,  
And yet so finely, that a troublous touch

Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a  
day,

A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
And these had been together from the

first.  
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,

hers:  
So much the boy foreran; but when his

date  
Doubled her own, for want of playmates,

he  
(Since Averill was a decad and a half

His elder, and their parents underground)  
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and

roll'd

His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt  
Against the rush of the air in the prone  
    swing,  
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-  
    ranged

Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it  
    green

In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
    grass,

The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,  
Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd  
All at one mark, all hitting: make-be-  
    lieves

For Edith and himself: or else he forged,  
But that was later, boyish histories  
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
    wreck,

Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true  
    love

Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and  
    faint,

But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.  
And thus together, save for college-times  
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded,  
    grew.

And more and more, the maiden woman-  
    grown,

He wasted hours with Averill; there,  
    when first

The tented winter-field was broken up  
Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
That soon should wear the garland; there  
    again

When burr and bine were gather'd;  
    lastly there

At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,  
On whose dull sameness his full tide of  
    youth

Broke with a phosphorescence charming  
    even

My lady; and the Baronet yet had laid  
No bar between them: dull and self-  
    involved,

Tall and erect, but bending from his  
    height

With half-allowing smiles for all the  
    world,

And mighty courteous in the main—his  
    pride

Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—  
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
Would care no more for Leolin's walking  
    with her

Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
    they ran

To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
Twofooted at the limit of his chain,  
Roaring to make a third: and how should  
    Love,

Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-  
    met eyes

Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow  
Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing that  
    they loved,

Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
Between them, nor by plight or broken  
    ring

Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that  
    hung

With wings of brooding shelter o'er her  
    peace,

Might have been other, save for Leolin's—  
Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour  
    by hour

Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and  
    drank

The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.  
For out beyond her lodges, where the  
    brook

Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
By sallowy rims, arose the labourers'  
    homes,

A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
That dimpling died into each other, huts  
At random scatter'd, each a nest in  
    bloom.

Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought  
 About them : here was one that, summer-blanch'd,  
 Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-joy  
 In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad ; and here  
 The warm-blue breathings of a hidden hearth  
 Broke from a bower of vine and honey-suckle :  
 One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars :  
 This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
 About it ; this, a milky-way on earth,  
 Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,  
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors ;  
 One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves  
 A summer burial deep in hollyhocks ;  
 Each, its own charm ; and Edith's everywhere ;  
 And Edith ever visitant with him,  
 He but less loved than Edith, of her poor :  
 For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,  
 Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
 Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,  
 Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored ;  
 He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,  
 A childly way with children, and a laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,

T

Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth  
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper  
 ' Bless,  
 God bless 'em : marriages are made in Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.  
 My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,  
 Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair ;  
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful : so when first he dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
 Of patron ' Good ! my lady's kinsman ! good !'  
 My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
 To listen : unawares they flitted off,  
 Busying themselves about the flowerage  
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,  
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days :  
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him  
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life :  
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,  
 Hated him with a momentary hate.  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumour ran, was he :  
 I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on everyone  
 And most on Edith : like a storm he came,  
 And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return

L

When others had been tested) there was one,  
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it  
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
 itself  
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
 Made by a breath. I know not whence  
 at first,  
 Nor of what race, the work; but as he told  
 The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves  
 He got it; for their captain after fight,  
 His comrades having fought their last  
 below,  
 Was climbing up the valley; at whom  
 he shot :  
 Down from the beetling crag to which he  
 clung  
 Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
 This dagger with him, which when now  
 admired  
 By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,  
 At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,  
 Tost over all her presents petulantly :  
 And when she show'd the wealthy scab-  
 bard, saying  
 'Look what a lovely piece of workman-  
 ship !'  
 Slight was his answer 'Well—I care not  
 for it :'  
 Then playing with the blade he prick'd  
 his hand,  
 'A gracious gift to give a lady, this !'  
 'But would it be more gracious' ask'd  
 the girl  
 'Were I to give this gift of his to one  
 That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No' said he.  
 'Me?—but I cared not for it. O pardon  
 me,  
 I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'  
 'Take it' she added sweetly, 'tho' his  
 gift ;  
 For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,  
 I care not for it either ;' and he said  
 'Why then I love it :' but Sir Aylmer  
 past,  
 And neither loved nor liked the thing he  
 heard.

The next day came a neighbour.  
 Blues and reds  
 They talk'd of : blues were sure of it, he  
 thought :  
 Then of the latest fox—where started—  
 kill'd  
 In such a bottom : 'Peter had the brush,  
 My Peter, first :' and did Sir Aylmer know  
 That great pock-pitted fellow had been  
 caught ?  
 Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
 hand,  
 And rolling as it were the substance of it  
 Between his palms a moment up and  
 down—  
 'The birds were warm, the birds were  
 warm upon him ;  
 We have him now :' and had Sir Aylmer  
 heard—  
 Nay, but he must—the land was ringing  
 of it—  
 This blacksmith border-marriage—one  
 they knew—  
 Raw from the nursery—who could trust  
 a child ?  
 That cursed France with her egalities !  
 And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially  
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent)  
 think—  
 For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise  
 To let that handsome fellow Averill walk  
 So freely with his daughter? people  
 talk'd—  
 The boy might get a notion into him ;  
 The girl might be entangled ere she knew.  
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening  
 spoke :  
 'The girl and boy, Sir, know their differ-  
 ences !'  
 'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch !'  
 and he, 'Enough,  
 More than enough, Sir ! I can guard my  
 own.'  
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
 watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
 house  
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same  
 night ;

Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough  
 piece  
 Of early rigid colour, under which  
 Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon  
 him  
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as  
 one  
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
 Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
 On either side the hearth, indignant ;  
 her,  
 Cooling her false cheek with a featherfan,  
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil  
 spurr'd,  
 And, like a beast hard-riden, breathing  
 hard.  
 'Ungenerous, dishonourable, base,  
 Presumptuous ! trusted as he was with  
 her,  
 The sole succeder to their wealth, their  
 lands,  
 The last remaining pillar of their house,  
 The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
 Their child.' 'Our child !' 'Our  
 heiress !' 'Ours !' for still,  
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,  
 'Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes are to  
 make.  
 I swear you shall not make them out of  
 mine.  
 Now inasmuch as you have practised on  
 her,  
 Perplext her, made her half forget herself,  
 Swerve from her duty to herself and us—  
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
 Far as we track ourselves—I say that  
 this—  
 Else I withdraw favour and countenance  
 From you and yours for ever—shall you  
 do.  
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall not  
 see her—  
 No, you shall write, and not to her, but  
 me :  
 And you shall say that having spoken  
 with me,  
 And after look'd into yourself, you find

That you meant nothing—as indeed you  
 know  
 That you meant nothing. Such a match  
 as this !  
 Impossible, prodigious !' These were  
 words,  
 As meted by his measure of himself,  
 Arguing boundless forbearance : after  
 which,  
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I  
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
 Never oh never,' for about as long  
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
 paused  
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
 within,  
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
 crying  
 'Boy, should I find you by my doors  
 again,  
 My men shall lash you from them like a  
 dog ;  
 Hence !' with a sudden execration drove  
 The footstool from before him, and arose ;  
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of teeth  
 that ground  
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still  
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man  
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood  
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face  
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but  
 now,  
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,  
 Vext with unworthy madness, and de-  
 form'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye  
 That watch'd him, till he heard the  
 ponderous door  
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the  
 land,  
 Went Leolin ; then, his passions all in  
 flood  
 And masters of his motion, furiously  
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
 brother's ran,  
 And foam'd away his heart at Averill's  
 ear :  
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
 amazed :

The man was his, had been his father's,  
friend :

He must have seen, himself had seen it  
long ;

He must have known, himself had known :  
besides,

He never yet had set his daughter forth  
Here in the woman-markets of the west,  
Where our Caucasians let themselves be  
sold.

Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
Leolin to him.

' Brother, for I have loved you more as  
son

Than brother, let me tell you : I myself—  
What is their pretty saying ? jilted, is it ?  
Jilted I was : I say it for your peace.

Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
shame

The woman should have borne, humili-  
ated,

I lived for years a stunted sunless life ;  
Till after our good parents past away  
Watching your growth, I seem'd again to  
grow.

Leolin, I almost sin in envying you :  
The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
Loves you : I know her : the worst  
thought she has

Is whiter even than her pretty hand :  
She must prove true : for, brother, where  
two fight

The strongest wins, and truth and love  
are strength,

And you are happy : let her parents be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon  
them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heiress,  
wealth,

Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth  
enough was theirs

For twenty matches. Were he lord of  
this,

Why twenty boys and girls should marry  
on it,

And forty blest ones bless him, and him-  
self

Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He be-  
lieved

This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon  
made

The harlot of the cities : nature crost  
Was mother of the foul adulteries

That saturate soul with body. Name,  
too ! name,

Their ancient name ! they *might* be  
proud ; its worth

Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she  
had look'd

Darling, to-night ! they must have rated  
her

Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-  
lords,

These partridge-breeders of a thousand  
years,

Who had mildew'd in their thousands,  
doing nothing

Since Egbert—why, the greater their  
disgrace !

Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in that !  
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler ? fools,

With such a vantage-ground for nobleness !  
He had known a man, a quintessence of

man,

The life of all—who madly loved—and he,  
Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,

Had rioted his life out, and made an end.  
He would not do it ! her sweet face and

faith  
Held him from that : but he had powers,  
he knew it :

Back would he to his studies, make a name,  
Name, fortune too : the world should ring

of him  
To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their  
graves :

Chancellor, or what is greatest would he  
be—

' O brother, I am grieved to learn your  
grief—

Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own  
excess,

And easily forgives it as his own,  
He laugh'd ; and then was mute ; but

presently  
Wept like a storm : and honest Averill

seeing



How low his brother's mood had fallen,  
fetch'd

His richest beeswing from a binn reserved  
For banquets, praised the waning red, and  
told

The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came of  
age—

Then drank and past it ; till at length the  
two,

Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed  
That much allowance must be made for  
men.

After an angry dream this kindlier glow  
Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,  
A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
That darken'd all the northward of her  
Hall.

Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest  
In agony, she promised that no force,  
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her :  
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
Labour for his own Edith, and return  
In such a sunlight of prosperity  
He should not be rejected. 'Write to  
me !

They loved me, and because I love their  
child

They hate me : there is war between us,  
dear,

Which breaks all bonds but ours ; we  
must remain

Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,  
Poor children, for their comfort : the wind  
blew ;

The rain of heaven, and their own bitter  
tears,

Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,  
mixt

Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went ; and as we task our-  
selves

To learn a language known but smatter-  
ingly

In phrases here and there at random,  
toil'd

Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,  
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
fame.

The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's  
room,

Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
scurrilous tale,—

Old scandals buried now seven decads deep  
In other scandals that have lived and died,  
And left the living scandal that shall die—  
Were dead to him already ; bent as he was  
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in  
hopes,

And prodigal of all brain-labour he,  
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,  
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,  
Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
Beside the river-bank : and then indeed  
Harder the times were, and the hands of  
power

Were bloodier, and the according hearts  
of men

Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-  
breeze,

Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose  
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering

His former talks with Edith, on him  
breathed

Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,  
After his books, to flush his blood with  
air,

Then to his books again. My lady's  
cousin,

Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,  
Drove in upon the student once or twice,  
Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,  
Had golden hopes for France and all  
mankind,

Answer'd all queries touching those at  
home

With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,  
And fain had haled him out into the  
world,

And air'd him there : his nearer friend  
would say

'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it  
snap.'

Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth  
 From where his worldless heart had kept  
 it warm,  
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
 him  
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :  
 For heart, I think, help'd head : her  
 letters too,  
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
 Like broken music, written as she found  
 Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,  
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he  
 saw  
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued them-  
 selves

To sell her, those good parents, for her  
 good.

Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
 Might lie within their compass, him they  
 lured

Into their net made pleasant by the baits  
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
 So month by month the noise about their  
 doors,

And distant blaze of those dull banquets,  
 made

The nightly wirer of their innocent hare  
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.

Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd  
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
 So often, that the folly taking wings  
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
 With rumour, and became in other fields  
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
 And laughter to their lords : but those at  
 home,

As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
 The cordon close and closer toward the  
 death,

Narrow'd her goings out and comings in ;  
 Forbad her first the house of Averill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealthier  
 farms,

Last from her own home-circle of the  
 poor

They barr'd her : yet she bore it : yet her  
 cheek

Kept colour : wondrous ! but, O mystery !  
 What amulet drew her down to that old  
 oak,

So old, that twenty years before, a part  
 Falling had let appear the brand of John—  
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,  
 but now

The broken base of a black tower, a cave  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourishing  
 spray.

There the manorial lord too curiously  
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove ;  
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read  
 Writhing a letter from his child, for which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and halter  
 gave

To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits  
 The letter which he brought, and swore  
 besides

To play their go-between as heretofore  
 Nor let them know themselves betray'd ;  
 and then,

Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
 went

Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot  
 dream

The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn  
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue  
 brush'd

Thro' the dim meadow toward his  
 treasure-trove,

Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—  
 who made

A downward crescent of her minion mouth,  
 Listless in all despondence,—read ; and  
 tore,

As if the living passion symbol'd there  
 Were living nerves to feel the rent ; and  
 burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self defied,  
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of  
 scorn

In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
 Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at last  
 Hopeless of answer : then tho' Averill wrote  
 And bad him with good heart sustain  
 himself—

All would be well—the lover heeded not,  
 But passionately restless came and went,  
 And rustling once at night about the place,  
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,  
 Raging return'd ; nor was it well for her  
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,  
 Watch'd even there ; and one was set to  
 watch

The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
 them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings : once  
 indeed,

Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride  
 in her,

She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly  
 Not knowing what possess'd him : that  
 one kiss

Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth ;  
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
 Seem'd hope's returning rose : and then  
 ensued

A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
 Or ordeal by kindness ; after this  
 He seldom crost his child without a sneer ;  
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-  
 nies :

Never one kindly smile, one kindly word :  
 So that the gentle creature shut from all  
 Her charitable use, and face to face  
 With twenty months of silence, slowly lost  
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.  
 Last, some low fever ranging round to spy  
 The weakness of a people or a house,  
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or  
 men,

Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt—  
 Save Christ as we believe him—found the  
 girl

And flung her down upon a couch of fire,  
 Where careless of the household faces near,  
 And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
 She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
 past.

Star to star vibrates light : may soul  
 to soul

Strike thro' a finer element of her own ?  
 So,—from afar,—touch as at once ? or  
 why

That night, that moment, when she named  
 his name,

Did the keen shriek 'Yes love, yes, Edith,  
 yes,'

Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers  
 woke,

And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,  
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
 trembling,

His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a  
 flyer :

Nor knew he wherefore he had made the  
 cry ;

And being much befooled and idioted  
 By the rough amity of the other, sank  
 As into sleep again. The second day,  
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
 A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with  
 death

Beside him, and the dagger which himself  
 Gave Edith, reddened with no bandit's  
 blood :

'From Edith' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his  
 death.

And when he came again, his flock be-  
 lieved—

Beholding how the years which are not  
 Time's

Had blasted him—that many thousand  
 days

Were clipt by horror from his term of life.  
 Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of  
 the first,

And being used to find her pastor texts,  
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying  
 him

To speak before the people of her child,  
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day  
 rose :

Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
woods

Was all the life of it ; for hard on these,  
A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens  
Stifed and chill'd at once ; but every roof  
Sent out a listener : many too had known  
Edith among the hamlets round, and  
since

The parents' harshness and the hapless  
loves

And double death were widely murmur'd,  
left

Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
tabernacle,

To hear him ; all in mourning these, and  
those

With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove  
Or kerchief ; while the church, — one  
night, except

For greenishglimmeringthro' the lancets,  
—made

Still paler the pale head of him, who  
tower'd

Above them, with his hopes in either  
grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd  
Averill,

His face magnetic to the hand from which  
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labour'd  
thro'

His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse  
' Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate !'

But lapsed into so long a pause again  
As half amazed half frightened all his flock :  
Then from his height and loneliness of  
grief

Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry  
heart

Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one  
sea,

Which rolling o'er the palaces of the  
proud,

And all but those who knew the living  
God—

Eight that were left to make a purer  
world—

When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
thunder, wrought

Such waste and havock as the idolatries,  
Which from the low light of mortality  
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of  
Heavens,

And worshipt their own darkness in the  
Highest ?

' Gash thyself, priest, and honour thy  
brute Baäl,

And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself ;  
For with thy worst self hast thou clothed  
thy God.

Then came a Lord in no wise like to  
Baäl.

The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now  
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.  
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine  
own lusts !—

No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—  
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing  
lawns,

And heaps of living gold that daily grow,  
And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.  
In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
God.

Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him* ; for  
thine

Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
Is wounded to the death that cannot die ;  
And tho' thou numberest with the followers  
Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow  
me."

Thee therefore with His light about thy  
feet,

Thee with His message ringing in thine  
ears,

Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from  
Heaven,

Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty  
God,

Count the more base idolater of the two ;  
Crueller ; as not passing thro' the fire  
Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro'  
the smoke,

The blight of low desires—darkening  
thine own  
To thine own likeness ; or if one of these,  
Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and  
fair—  
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one  
By those who most have cause to sorrow  
for her—  
Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
Fair as the Angel that said “Hail !” she  
seem’d,  
Who entering fill’d the house with sudden  
light.  
For so mine own was brighten’d : where  
indeed  
The roof so lowly but that beath of  
Heaven  
Dawn’d sometime thro’ the doorway?  
whose the babe  
Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
Warm’d at her bosom? The poor child  
of shame  
The common care whom no one cared  
for, leapt  
To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
As with the mother he had never known,  
In gambols ; for her fresh and innocent  
eyes  
Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
That all neglected places of the field  
Broke into nature’s music when they saw  
her.  
Low was her voice, but won mysterious  
way  
Thro’ the seal’d ear to which a louder  
one  
Was all but silence—free of alms her  
hand—  
The hand that robbed your cottage-walls  
with flowers  
Has often toil’d to clothe your little ones ;  
How often placed upon the sick man’s  
brow  
Cool’d it, or laid his feverous pillow  
smooth !  
Had you one sorrow and she shared it  
not ?  
One burthen and she would not lighten it ?

One spiritual doubt she did not soothe ?  
Or when some heat of difference sparkled  
out,  
How sweetly would she glide between  
your wraths,  
And steal you from each other ! for she  
walk’d  
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of  
love,  
Who still’d the rolling wave of Galilee !  
And one—of him I was not bid to  
speak—  
Was always with her, whom you also  
knew.  
Him too you loved, for he was worthy  
love.  
And these had been together from the  
first ;  
They might have been together till the  
last.  
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when  
sorely tried,  
May wreck itself without the pilot’s guilt,  
Without the captain’s knowledge : hope  
with me.  
Whose shame is that, if he went hence  
with shame ?  
Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these  
I cry to vacant chairs and widow’d walls,  
“My house is left unto me desolate.””  
While thus he spoke, his hearers wept ;  
but some,  
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than  
those  
That knit themselves for summer shadow,  
scowl’d  
At their great lord. He, when it seem’d  
he saw  
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but  
fork’d  
Of the near storm, and aiming at his  
head,  
Sat anger-charm’d from sorrow, soldier-  
like,  
Erect : but when the preacher’s cadence  
flow’d  
Softening thro’ all the gentle attributes  
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch’d  
his face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron  
mouth ;  
And 'O pray God that he hold up' she  
thought  
'Or surely I shall shame myself and him.'

'Nor yours the blame—for who beside  
your hearths  
Can take her place—if echoing me you  
cry

"Our house is left unto us desolate" ?  
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou  
known,

O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-  
stood

The things belonging to thy peace and  
ours !

Is there no prophet but the voice that  
calls

Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re-  
pent" ?

Is not our own child on the narrow way,  
Who down to those that saunter in the  
broad

Cries "Come up hither," as a prophet to  
us ?

Is there no stoning save with flint and  
rock ?

Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—  
No desolation but by sword and fire ?

Yes, as your moanings witness, and my-  
self

Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.  
Give me your prayers, for he is past your  
prayers,

Not past the living fount of pity in  
Heaven.

But I that thought myself long-suffering,  
meek,

Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how the  
words

Have twisted back upon themselves, and  
mean

Vileness, we are grown so proud—I  
wish'd my voice

A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—  
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
To inflame the tribes : but there—out  
yonder—earth

Lightens from her own central Hell—O  
there

The red fruit of an old idolatry—  
The heads of chiefs and princes fall so  
fast,

They cling together in the ghastly sack—  
The land all shambles—naked marriages  
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd  
France,

By shores that darken with the gathering  
wolf,

Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.  
Is this a time to madden madness then ?  
Was this a time for these to flaunt their  
pride ?

May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense  
as those

Which hid the Holiest from the people's  
eyes

Ere the great death, shroud this great sin  
from all !

Doubtless our narrow world must canvass  
it :

O rather pray for those and pity them,  
Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd,  
bring

Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the  
grave—

Who broke the bond which they desired  
to break,

Which else had link'd their race with  
times to come—

Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
purity,

Grossly contriving their dear daughter's  
good—

Poor souls, and knew not what they did,  
but sat

Ignorant, devising their own daughter's  
death !

May not that earthly chastisement suffice ?  
Have not our love and reverence left  
them bare ?

Will not another take their heritage ?  
Will there be children's laughter in their  
hall

For ever and for ever, or one stone  
Left on another, or is it a light thing  
That I, their guest, their host, their  
ancient friend,



I made by these the last of all my race,  
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
cried

Christ ere His agony to those that swore  
Not by the temple but the gold, and made  
Their own traditions God, and slew the  
Lord,

And left their memories a world's curse—  
"Behold,  
Your house is left unto you desolate"?'

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no  
more :

Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
lessly,

Her cramped-up sorrow pain'd her, and a  
sense

Of meanness in her unresisting life.

Then their eyes vexed her ; for on entering  
He had cast—the curtains of their seat  
aside—

Black velvet of the costliest—she herself  
Had seen to that : fain had she closed  
them now,

Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
Her husband inch by inch, but when she  
laid,

Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd  
His face with the other, and at once, as  
falls

A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
swoon'd.

Then her own people bore along the nave  
Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre  
face

Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
years :

And her the Lord of all the landscape  
round

Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd  
all

Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
ways

Stumbling across the market to his death,  
Unpitied ; for he groped as blind, and  
seem'd

Always about to fall, grasping the pews

And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
door ;

Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,

Strode from the porch, tall and erect  
again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate  
Save under pall with bearers. In one  
month,

Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her  
child ;

And when he felt the silence of his house  
About him, and the change and not the  
change,

And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors  
Staring for ever from their gilded walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head

Began to droop, to fall ; the man became  
Imbecile ; his one word was 'desolate' ;  
Dead for two years before his death was  
he ;

But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped

His keepers, and the silence which he felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child ; nor wanted at his  
end

The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender  
hearts,

And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd  
race ;

Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.

Then the great Hall was wholly broken  
down,

And the broad woodland parcell'd into  
farms ;

And where the two contrived their  
daughter's good,

Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made  
his run,

The hedgehog underneath the plantain  
bores,

The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin  
weasel there

Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

## SEA DREAMS

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred ;  
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan  
child—

One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three  
years old :

They, thinking that her clear germander  
eye

Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
Came, with a month's leave given them,  
to the sea :

For which his gains were dock'd, however  
small :

Small were his gains, and hard his work ;  
besides,

Their slender household fortunes (for the  
man

Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :  
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
Would darken, as he cursed his credulous-  
ness,

And that one unctuous mouth which lured  
him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian  
mine.

Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd  
a coast,

All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,  
At close of day ; slept, woke, and went  
the next,

The Sabbath, pious variers from the  
church,

To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,  
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,  
Announced the coming doom, and ful-  
minated

Against the scarlet woman and her creed ;  
For sideways up he swung his arms, and  
shriek'd

'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if he  
held

The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
Were that great Angel ; 'Thus with  
violence

Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;

Then comes the close.' The gentle-  
hearted wife

Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;  
He at his own : but when the wordy storm  
Had ended, forth they came and paced  
the shore,

Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce  
believed

(The sootflake of so many a summer still  
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.  
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on  
cliff,

Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,  
And rosed in the east : then homeward and  
to bed :

Where she, who kept a tender Christian  
hope,

Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
'Let not the sun go down upon your  
wrath,'

Said, 'Love, forgive him' : but he did not  
speak ;

And silenced by that silence lay the wife,  
Remembering her dear Lord who died for  
all,

And musing on the little lives of men,  
And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full  
tide

Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
foremost rocks

Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild sea-  
smoke,

And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and  
fell

In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon  
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs  
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the  
babe,

Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd  
and woke

The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
'A wreck, a wreck !' then turn'd, and  
groaning said,

'Forgive ! How many will say, "for-  
give," and find

A sort of absolution in the sound

To hate a little longer ! No ; the sin  
That neither God nor man can well for-  
give,

Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
Is it so true that second thoughts are best?  
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?  
Too ripe, too late ! they come too late  
for use.

Ah love, there surely lives in man and  
beast  
Something divine to warn them of their  
foes :

And such a sense, when first I fronted him,  
Said, "Trust him not" ; but after, when  
I came

To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
less ;

Fought with what seem'd my own un-  
charity ;

Sat at his table ; drank his costly wines ;  
Made more and more allowance for his  
talk ;

Went further, fool ! and trusted him with  
all,

All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
Of dust and deskwork : there is no such  
mine,

None ; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
Not making. Ruin'd ! ruin'd ! the sea  
roars

Ruin : a fearful night !'

'Not fearful ; fair,'  
Said the good wife, 'if every star in  
heaven

Can make it fair : you do but hear the tide.  
Had you ill dreams ?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd  
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
And I from out the boundless outer deep  
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
Of those dark caves that run beneath the  
cliffs.

I thought the motion of the boundless deep  
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved  
upon it

In darkness : then I saw one lovely star  
Larger and larger. "What a world," I  
thought,

"To live in !" but in moving on I found  
Only the landward exit of the cave,  
Bright with the sun upon the stream  
beyond :

And near the light a giant woman sat,  
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
A pickaxe in her hand : then out I slipt  
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
As high as heaven, and every bird that  
sings :

And here the night-light flickering in my  
eyes  
Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,' she said,  
'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,  
'And mused upon it, drifting up the  
stream

In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
The broken vision ; for I dream'd that still  
The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
And that the woman walk'd upon the  
brink :

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her  
of it :

"It came," she said, "by working in the  
mines :"

O then to ask her of my shares, I thought ;  
And ask'd ; but not a word ; she shook  
her head.

And then the motion of the current ceased,  
And there was rolling thunder ; and we  
reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and  
thorns ;

But she with her strong feet up the steep  
hill

Trod out a path : I follow'd ; and at top  
She pointed seaward : there a fleet of  
glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
That not one moment ceased to thunder,  
past

In sunshine : right across its track there lay,  
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
Or what seem'd gold : and I was glad at  
first

To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
Still so much gold was left ; and then I  
fear'd

Lest the gay navy there 'should splinter  
on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn them  
off ;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save it)  
near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and  
vanish'd, and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
My dream was Life ; the woman honest  
Work ;

And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort  
him,

'You raised your arm, you tumbled down  
and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medicine  
in it ;

And, breaking that, you made and broke  
your dream :

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband ;  
'yesterday

I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd  
That which I ask'd the woman in my  
dream.

Like her, he shook his head. "Show me  
the books !"

He dodged me with a long and loose  
account.

"The books, the books !" but he, he could  
not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and death :  
When the great Books (see Daniel seven  
and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant me  
well ;

And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
All over with the fat affectionate smile  
That makes the widow lean. "My dearest  
friend,

Have faith, have faith ! We live by faith,"  
said he ;

"And all things work together for the good  
Of those"—it makes me sick to quote him  
—last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-  
you went.

I stood like one that had received a blow :  
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,  
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you : then my  
eyes

Pursued him down the street, and far  
away,

Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul ?' said  
the good wife ;

'So are we all : but do not call him, love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved,  
forgive.

His gain is loss ; for he that wrongs his  
friend

Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
about

A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd :  
And that drags down his life : then comes  
what comes

Hereafter : and he meant, he said he  
meant,

Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you  
well.'

"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew"—

Love, let me quote these lines, that you  
may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of yours—

"With all his conscience and one eye  
askew,

So false, he partly took himself for true ;  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart  
was dry,

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his  
eye ;

Who, never naming God except for gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain,

Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his  
 tool,  
 And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and  
 fool;  
 Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he  
 forged,  
 And snake-like slined his victim ere he  
 gorged;  
 And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest  
 Arising, did his holy oily best,  
 Dropping the too rough H in Hell and  
 Heaven,  
 To spread the Word by which himself  
 had thriven."  
 How like you this old satire?'

'Nay,' she said,  
 'I loathe it: he had never kindly heart,  
 Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.  
 But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one  
 That altogether went to music? Still  
 It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd  
 Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,  
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapour, lay,  
 And ever in it a low musical note  
 Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd,  
 a ridge  
 Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
 Grew with the growing note, and when  
 the note  
 Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on  
 those cliffs  
 Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as  
 that  
 Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no  
 more,  
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
 One after one: and then the great ridge  
 drew,  
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
 And past into the belt and swell'd again  
 Slowly to music: ever when it broke  
 The statues, king or saint, or founder fell;

Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin  
 left  
 Came men and women in dark clusters  
 round,  
 Some crying, 'Set them up! they shall  
 not fall!'  
 And others, 'Let them lie, for they have  
 fall'n.'  
 And still they strove and wrangled: and  
 she grieved  
 In her strange dream, she knew not why,  
 to find  
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
 With that sweet note; and ever as their  
 shrieks  
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the  
 crowd  
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd  
 their eyes  
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept  
 away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of  
 stone,  
 To the waste deeps together.

'Then I fixt  
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown'd with stars and high among  
 the stars,—  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her  
 child  
 High up on one of those dark minster-  
 fronts—  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I  
 woke,  
 And my dream awed me:—well—but  
 what are dreams?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a  
 glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a  
 child.'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this tide's  
 roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)

Went both to make your dream : but if  
there were

A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd  
about,

Why, that would make our passions far  
too like

The discords dear to the musician. No—  
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns  
of heaven :

True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
With nothing but the Devil !'

“ ‘ True ’ indeed !

One of our town, but later by an hour  
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on  
the shore ;

While you were running down the sands,  
and made

The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow  
flap,

Good man, to please the child. She  
brought strange news.

Why were you silent when I spoke to-  
night ?

I had set my heart on your forgiving him  
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the  
dead.'

‘ Dead ! who is dead ?’

‘ The man your eye pursued.

A little after you had parted with him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.’

‘ Dead ? he ? of heart-disease ? what  
heart had he  
To die of ? dead !’

‘ Ah, dearest, if there be

A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge him  
with,

His angel broke his heart. But your  
rough voice

(You spoke so loud) has roused the child  
again.

Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she not  
sleep

Without her “ little birdie ” ? well then,  
sleep,

And I will sing you “ birdie.”’

Saying this,

The woman half turn'd round from him  
she loved,

Left him one hand, and reaching thro'  
the night

Her other, found (for it was close be-  
side)

And half-embraced the basket cradle-  
head

With one soft arm, which, like the pliant  
bough

That moving moves the nest and nestling,  
sway'd

The cradle, while she sang this baby song.

What does little birdie say

In her nest at peep of day ?

Let me fly, says little birdie,

Mother, let me fly away.

Birdie, rest a little longer,

Till the little wings are stronger.

So she rests a little longer,

Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,

In her bed at peep of day ?

Baby says, like little birdie,

Let me rise and fly away.

Baby, sleep a little longer,

Till the little limbs are stronger.

If she sleeps a little longer,

Baby too shall fly away.

‘ She sleeps : let us too, let all evil,  
sleep.

He also sleeps—another sleep than  
ours.

He can do no more wrong : forgive him,  
dear,

And I shall sleep the sounder !’

Then the man,

‘ His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to  
come.

Yet let your sleep for this one night be  
sound :

I do forgive him !’

‘ Thanks, my love,’ she said,

‘ Your own will be the sweeter,’ and they  
slept.



LUCRETIVS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold ; for when the morning  
flush

Of passion and the first embrace had died  
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none the  
less,

Yet often when the woman heard his foot  
Return from paces in the field, and ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master took  
Small notice, or austere, for—his mind  
Half buried in some weightier argument,  
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise  
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past  
To turn and ponder those three hundred  
scrolls

Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.  
She brook'd it not ; but wrathful, petulant,  
Dreaming some rival, sought and found  
a witch

Who brew'd the philtre which had power,  
they said,

To lead an errant passion home again.  
And this, at times, she mingled with his  
drink,

And this destroy'd him ; for the wicked  
broth

Confused the chemic labour of the blood,  
And tickling the brute brain within the  
man's

Made havock among those tender cells,  
and check'd

His power to shape : he loathed himself ;  
and once

After a tempest woke upon a morn  
That mock'd him with returning calm,  
and cried :

' Storm in the night ! for thrice I heard  
the rain

Rushing ; and once the flash of a  
thunderbolt—

Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—  
Struck out the streaming mountain-side,  
and show'd

A riotous confluence of watercourses  
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,  
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

' Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
Gods, what dreams !

For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Per-  
chance

We do but recollect the dreams that come  
Just ere the waking : terrible ! for it seem'd  
A void was made in Nature ; all her bonds  
Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-  
streams

And torrents of her myriad universe,  
Ruining along the illimitable inane,  
Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever : that was mine, my dream, I  
knew it—

Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
plies

His function of the woodland : but the  
next !

I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed  
Came driving rainlike down again on  
earth,

And where it dash'd the reddening mea-  
dow, sprang

No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,  
For these I thought my dream would  
show to me,

But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made  
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
worse

Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.  
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
round me drove

In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—  
Was it the first beam of my latest day ?

' Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
out the breasts,

The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a  
sword

Now over and now under, now direct,  
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
shamed

At all that beauty ; and as I stared, a fire,  
The fire that left a roofless Ilium,  
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that  
I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
thine,  
Because I would not one of thine own  
doves,  
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee?  
thine,  
Forgetful how my rich procemion makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My  
tongue  
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of  
these  
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?  
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and  
scorn,  
Live the great life which all our greatest  
fain  
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves  
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry  
to thee  
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms  
Round him, and keep him from the lust  
of blood  
That makes a steaming slaughter-house  
of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant  
not her,  
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and  
tempt  
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were  
abroad;  
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
wept  
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;  
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
Calliope to grace his golden verse—  
Ay, and this Kypriis also—did I take  
That popular name of thine to shadow  
forth  
The all-generating powers and genial heat

Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
thick blood  
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
are glad  
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of  
flowers:  
Which things appear the work of mighty  
Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go *my* work is  
left  
Unfinish'd—*if* I go. The Gods, who  
haunt  
The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a  
wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of  
snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to  
mar  
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the  
Gods!  
If all be atoms, how then should the  
Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law? My master  
held  
That Gods there are, for all men so  
believe.

I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless.  
Meant? I meant?  
I have forgotten what I meant: my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods, the  
Sun,  
Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—  
Has mounted yonder; since he never  
sware,  
Except his wrath were wreak'd on  
wretched man,

That he would only shine among the dead  
Hereafter ; tales ! for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-  
ing ox

Moan round the spit—nor knows he  
what he sees ;

King of the East altho' he seem, and girt  
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly  
lifts

His golden feet on those empurpled stairs  
That climb into the windy halls of  
heaven :

And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain ;  
And here he stays upon a freezing orb  
That fain would gaze upon him to the  
last ;

And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n  
And closed by those who mourn a friend  
in vain,

Not thankful that his troubles are no  
more.

And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell  
Whether I mean this day to end myself,  
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That men like soldiers may not quit the  
post

Allotted by the Gods : but he that holds  
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he  
care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at  
once,

Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and  
sink

Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone,  
that break

Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-  
life,

And wretched age—and worst disease of  
all,

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
The phantom husks of something foully  
done,

And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,  
And blasting the long quiet of my breast  
With animal heat and dire insanity ?

'How should the mind, except it loved  
them, clasp

These idols to herself? or do they fly  
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the  
flakes

In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce  
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour  
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear  
The keepers down, and throng, their rags  
and they

The basest, far into that council-hall  
Where sit the best and stateliest of the  
land ?

'Can I not fling this horror off me  
again,

Seeing with how great ease Nature can  
smile,

Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
storm,

At random ravage? and how easily  
The mountain there has cast his cloudy  
slough,

Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and  
within

All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
men ?

'But who was he, that in the garden  
snared

Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—  
For look ! what is it? there? yon arbutus  
Totters ; a noiseless riot underneath  
Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
tops quivering—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and  
Faun ;

And here an Oread—how the sun delights  
To glance and shift about her slippery  
sides,

And rosy knees and supple roundedness,  
And budded bosom-peaks—who this way  
runs

Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows ; but him I proved impossible ;  
Twy-natured is no nature : yet he draws  
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now  
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind

That ever butted his rough brother-brute  
 For lust or lusty blood or provender :  
 I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him ; and  
 she  
 Loathes him as well ; such a precipitate  
 heel,  
 Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-  
 wing,  
 Whirls her to me : but will she fling  
 herself,  
 Shameless upon me ? Catch her, goat-  
 foot : nay,  
 Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilder-  
 ness,  
 And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide ! do  
 I wish—  
 What ?—that the bush were leafless ? or  
 to overwhelm  
 All of them in one massacre ? O ye Gods,  
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to you  
 From childly wont and ancient use I  
 call—  
 I thought I lived securely as yourselves—  
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-  
 spite,  
 No madness of ambition, avarice, none :  
 No larger feast than under plane or pine  
 With neighbours laid along the grass, to  
 take  
 Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,  
 Affirming each his own philosophy—  
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
 But now it seems some unseen monster  
 lays  
 His vast and filthy hands upon my will,  
 Wrenching it backward into his ; and  
 spoils  
 My bliss in being ; and it was not great ;  
 For save when shutting reasons up in  
 rhythm,  
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
 To make a truth less harsh, I often grew  
 Tired of so much within our little life,  
 Or of so little in our little life—  
 Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and there  
 an end—  
 And since the nobler pleasure seems to  
 fade,

Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
 Not manlike end myself ?—our privilege—  
 What beast has heart to do it ? And what  
 man,  
 What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph  
 thus ?  
 Not I ; not he, who bears one name with  
 her  
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless  
 doom of kings,  
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in her  
 veins,  
 She made her blood in sight of Collatine  
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless  
 air,  
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her  
 heart.  
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth,  
 which breaks  
 As I am breaking now !

‘ And therefore now  
 Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
 Those blind beginnings that have made  
 me man,  
 Dash them anew together at her will  
 Thro' all her cycles—into man once more,  
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower :  
 But till this cosmic order everywhere  
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day  
 Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour  
 perhaps  
 Is not so far when momentary man  
 Shall seem no more a something to him-  
 self,  
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes  
 and fanes,  
 And even his bones long laid within the  
 grave,  
 The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
 Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,  
 My golden work in which I told a truth  
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and  
 plucks  
 The mortal soul from out immortal hell,  
 Shall stand : ay, surely : then it fails at  
 last

And perishes as I must ; for O Thou,  
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
 Without one pleasure and without one  
 pain,

Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so they  
 win—

Thus—thus : the soul flies out and dies  
 in the air.'

With that he drove the knife into his  
 side :

She heard him raging, heard him fall ;  
 ran in,

Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon  
 herself

As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back, fell  
 on him,

Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he answer'd,  
 ' Care not thou !

Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee  
 well !'

## THE PRINCESS;

### A MEDLEY

#### PROLOGUE

SIR Walter Vivian all a summer's day  
 Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
 Up to the people : thither flock'd at noon  
 His tenants, wife and child, and thither  
 half

The neighbouring borough with their  
 Institute

Of which he was the patron. I was  
 there

From college, visiting the son,—the son  
 A Walter too,—with others of our set,  
 Five others : we were seven at Vivian-  
 place.

And me that morning Walter show'd  
 the house,

Greek, set with busts : from vases in the  
 hall

Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than  
 their names,

Grew side by side ; and on the pavement  
 lay

Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the  
 park,

Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of  
 Time ;

And on the tables every clime and age

Jumbled together ; celts and calumets,  
 Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava,  
 fans

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
 Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
 The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-  
 clubs

From the isles of palm : and higher on  
 the walls,

Betwixt the monst'rous horns of elk and  
 deer,

His own forefathers' arms and armour  
 hung,

And ' this ' he said ' was Hugh's at  
 Agincourt ;

And that was old Sir Ralph's at As-  
 calon :

A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle  
 With all about him '—which he brought,  
 and I

Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with  
 knights,

Half-legend, half-historic, counts and  
 kings

Who laid about them at their wills and  
 died ;

And mixt with these, a lady, one that  
 arm'd

Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the  
gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from  
her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,  
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a  
soldier's death,  
But now when all was lost or seem'd as  
lost—

Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—  
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the  
gate,

And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses'  
heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles of  
the wall,

And some were push'd with lances from  
the rock,

And part were drown'd within the whirl-  
ing brook :

O miracle of noble womanhood !'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;  
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he  
said,

'To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went  
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)  
Down thro' the park : strange was the  
sight to me ;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,  
sown

With happy faces and with holiday.

There moved the multitude, a thousand  
heads :

The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a  
font of stone

And drew, from butts of water on the  
slope,

The fountain of the moment, playing,  
now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded  
ball

Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower  
down

A man with knobs and wires and vials  
fired

A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields : and here were tele-  
scopes

For azure views ; and there a group of  
girls

In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter :  
round the lake

A little clock-work steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies : perch'd about the  
knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam :

A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and past :

And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations ; so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science ; other-  
where

Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamour  
bowl'd

And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd  
about

Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men  
and maids

Arranged a country dance, and flew thro'  
light

And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and over-  
head

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from  
end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of  
the time ;

And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-  
claspt,

Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost  
they gave

The park, the crowd, the house ; but all  
within

The sward was trim as any garden lawn :



And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends  
From neighbour seats: and there was  
Ralph himself,

A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had  
wound

A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied  
nook

Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a  
feast

Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,  
And there we join'd them: then the  
maiden Aunt

Took this fair day for text, and from it  
preach'd

An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great; but we, unworthier,  
told

Of college: he had climb'd across the  
spikes,

And he had squeezed himself betwixt the  
bars,

And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs;  
and one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common  
men,

But honeying at the whisper of a lord;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads  
I saw

The feudal warrior lady-clad; which  
brought

My book to mind: and opening this I  
read

Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of  
her

That drove her foes with slaughter from  
her walls,

And much I praised her nobleness, and  
'Where,'

Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him) 'lives there such a woman  
now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia 'There are thou-  
sands now

Such women, but convention beats them  
down:

It is but bringing up; no more than that:  
You men have done it: how I hate you  
all!

Ah, were I something great! I wish I  
were

Some mighty poetess, I would shame you  
then,

That love to keep us children! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would  
build

Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are  
taught;

We are twice as quick!' And here she  
shook aside

The hand that play'd the patron with her  
curls.

And one said smiling 'Pretty were the  
sight

If our old halls could change their sex,  
and flaunt

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for  
deans,

And sweet girl-graduates in their golden  
hair.

I think they should not wear our rusty  
gowns,

But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or  
Ralph

Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilias in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the  
nest,

Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:  
'That's your light way; but I would  
make it death'

For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she  
laugh'd;

A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her,  
she:

But Walter hail'd a score of names upon  
 her,  
 And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful  
 Puss,'  
 And swore he long'd at college, only  
 long'd,  
 All else was well, for she-society.  
 They boated and they cricketed; they  
 talk'd  
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;  
 They lost their weeks; they vext the  
 souls of deans;  
 They rode; they betted; made a hundred  
 friends,  
 And caught the blossom of the flying  
 terms,  
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,  
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he  
 spoke,  
 Part banter, part affection.  
 'True,' she said,  
 'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd  
 us much.  
 I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you  
 did.'

She held it out; and as a parrot turns  
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,  
 And bites it for true heart and not for  
 harm,  
 So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd  
 And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!'   
 he said.  
 'Come, listen! here is proof that you  
 were miss'd:  
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;  
 And there we took one tutor as to read:  
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and  
 square  
 Were out of season: never man, I think,  
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:  
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,  
 And our long walks were stript as bare  
 as brooms,  
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
 In wassail; often, like as many girls—  
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
 As many little trifling Lilies—play'd  
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,

And *what's my thought* and *when* and  
*where* and *how*,  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth  
 As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:  
 A pleasant game, she thought: she liked  
 it more  
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
 But these—what kind of tales did men  
 tell men,  
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain  
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips:  
 And Walter nodded at me; 'He began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn; and so  
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?  
 what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
 Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,  
 The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'  
 Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the maiden  
 Aunt.

'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?  
 A tale for summer as befits the time,  
 And something it should be to suit the  
 place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn!'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I  
 laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
 mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her  
 face

With colour) turn'd to me with 'As you  
 will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clam-  
 our'd he,  
 'And make her some great Princess, six  
 feet high,  
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
 The Prince to win her!'

‘Then follow me, the Prince,’

I answer’d, ‘each be hero in his turn !  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
dream.—

Heroic seems our Princess as required—  
But something made to suit with Time  
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies’ rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experi-  
ments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt  
them all—

This *were* a medley ! we should have him  
back

Who told the “Winter’s tale” to do it  
for us.

No matter : we will say whatever comes.  
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space.’

So I began,

And the rest follow’d : and the women  
sang

Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :  
And here I give the story and the songs.

# I

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in  
face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern  
star.

There lived an ancient legend in our  
house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire  
burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-  
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood should  
know

The shadow from the substance, and that  
one

Should come to fight with shadows and  
to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.

And, truly, waking dreams were, more or  
less,

An old and strange affection of the house.  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven  
knows what :

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk’d and talk’d as hereto-  
fore,

I seem’d to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his guilt-head  
cane,

And paw’d his beard, and mutter’d  
‘catalepsy.’

My mother pitying made a thousand  
prayers ;

My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look’d on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :  
But my good father thought a king a king ;  
He cared not for the affection of the house ;  
He held his sceptre like a pedant’s wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and  
hands

Reach’d out, and pick’d offenders from  
the mass

For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade,  
betroth’d

To one, a neighbouring Princess : she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old ; and still from time  
to time

Came murmurs of her beauty from the  
South,

And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress ; and all around them  
both

Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about  
their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I  
should wed,

My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her : these  
brought back

A present, a great labour of the loom ;  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind :

Besides, they saw the king ; he took the gifts ;  
 He said there was a compact ; that was true :  
 But then she had a will ; was he to blame ?  
 And maiden fancies ; loved to live alone  
 Among her women ; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence-room I stood  
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :  
 The first, a gentleman of broken means  
 (His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts  
 Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,  
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
 Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,  
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,  
 and rent  
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof  
 From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he sware  
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
 And bring her in a whirlwind : then he chew'd  
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd  
 his spleen,  
 Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. ' My father, let me go.  
 It cannot be but some gross error lies  
 In this report, this answer of a king,  
 Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable :  
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
 May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said :  
 ' I have a sister at the foreign court,

Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know,  
 Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :  
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
 The lady of three castles in that land :  
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean.'  
 And Cyril whisper'd : ' Take me with you too.'  
 Then laughing ' what, if these weird seizures come  
 Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
 To point you out the shadow from the truth !  
 Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;  
 I grate on rusty hinges here : ' but ' No !'  
 Roar'd the rough king, ' you shall not ; we ourself  
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
 In iron gauntlets : break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and past  
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ;  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;  
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :  
 What were those fancies ? wherefore break her troth ?  
 Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated  
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks  
 Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice  
 Went with it, ' Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
 Became her golden shield, I stole from court  
 With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread  
 To hear my father's clamour at our backs  
 With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night ;  
 But all was quiet : from the bastion'd walls

Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier : then we  
crost  
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and  
grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilder-  
ness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and  
small his voice,  
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling  
wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we  
came,  
And my betroth'd. ' You do us, Prince,'  
he said,

Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
' All honour. We remember love our-  
selves

In our sweet youth : there did a compact  
pass

Longsummers back, a kind of ceremony—  
I think the year in which our olives  
fail'd.

I would you had her, Prince, with all my  
heart,

With my full heart : but there were  
widows here,

Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this ; with this our ban-  
quets rang ;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of  
talk ;

Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot  
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter  
held,

Was all in all : they had but been, she  
thought,

As children ; they must lose the child,  
assume

The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she  
wrote,

Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful ; odes  
About this losing of the child ; and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;  
And they that know such things—I sought  
but peace ;

No critic I—would call them master-  
pieces :

They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a  
boon,

A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it : and  
there,

All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and  
more

We know not,—only this : they see no  
men,

Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look  
upon her

As on a kind of paragon ; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to  
breed

Dispute between myself and mine : but  
since

(And I confess with right) you think me  
bound

In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your  
chance

Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king ;  
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)  
Went forth again with both my friends.  
We rode

Many a long league back to the North.  
At last

From hills, that look'd across a land of  
hope,

We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;

There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine  
 host  
 To council, plied him with his richest  
 wines,  
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the  
 king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared  
 As blank as death in marble; then ex-  
 claim'd

Averting it was clear against all rules  
 For any man to go: but as his brain  
 Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,  
 'Had given us letters, was he bound to  
 speak?

The king would bear him out;' and at  
 the last—

The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
 'No doubt that we might make it worth  
 his while.

She once had past that way; he heard  
 her speak;

She scared him; life! he never saw the  
 like;

She look'd as grand as doomsday and as  
 grave:

And he, he revered his liege-lady there;  
 He always made a point to post with  
 mares;

His daughter and his housemaid were the  
 boys:

The land, he understood, for miles about  
 Was till'd by women; all the swine were  
 sows,

And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,  
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed  
 in act,

Remembering how we thrèe presented  
 Maid

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of  
 feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
 We sent mine host to purchase female  
 gear;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to  
 shake

The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
 To lace us up, till, each, in maiden  
 plumes

We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe  
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
 steeds,  
 And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
 And rode till midnight when the college  
 lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
 And linden alley: then we past an arch,  
 Whereon a woman-statue rose with  
 wings

From four wing'd horses dark against the  
 stars;

And some inscription ran along the front,  
 But deep in shadow further on we gain'd  
 A little street half garden and half house;  
 But scarce could hear each other speak  
 for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers  
 falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
 Of fountains spouted up and showering  
 down

In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:  
 And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
 Rapt in her song, and careless of the  
 snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven  
 and Earth

With constellation and with continent,  
 Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;  
 A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable  
 wench

Came running at the call, and help'd us  
 down.

Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and  
 sail'd,

Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
 gave

Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
 In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,  
 And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche'  
 she said,

'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was  
 prettiest,  
 Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers  
 are we,'



One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,

In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East ;

‘Three ladies of the Northern empire pray

Your Highness would enroll them with  
your own,

As Lady Psyche’s pupils.’

This I seal’d :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
And o’er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem’d

To float about a glimmering night, and watch

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight,  
swell

On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

## II

As thro’ the land at eve we went,

And pluck’d the ripen’d ears,

We fell out, my wife and I,

O we fell out I know not why,

And kiss’d again with tears.

And blessings on the falling out

That all the more endears, -

When we fall out with those we love

And kiss again with tears !

For when we came where lies the child

We lost in other years,

There above the little grave,

O there above the little grave,

We kiss’d again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress came :

She brought us Academic silks, in hue

The lilac, with a silken hood to each,

And zoned with gold ; and now when these were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,

-She, curtsying her obeisance, let us know  
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,

I first, and following thro’ the porch that sang

All round with laurel, issued in a court  
Compact of lucid marbles, boss’d with lengths

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group’d in threes,

Enring’d a billowing fountain in the midst ;  
And here and there on lattice edges lay  
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,

With two tame leopards couch’d beside her throne,

All beauty compass’d in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun  
Than our man’s earth ; such eyes were in her head,

And so much grace and power, breathing down

From over her arch’d brows, with every turn

Lived thro’ her to the tips of her long hands,

And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

‘We give you welcome : not without redound

Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ?’

‘We of the court’ said Cyril. ‘From the court’

She answer’d, ‘then ye know the Prince ?’ and he :

‘The climax of his age ! as tho’ there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,

He worships your ideal :’ she replied :

'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear

This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds  
would seem

As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;

Your language proves you still the child.  
Indeed,

We dream not of him : when we set our hand

To this great work, we purposed with  
ourselves

Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men,  
that so,

Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords  
ally

Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with  
scale.'

At those high words, we conscious of  
ourselves,

Perused the matting ; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as  
these :

Not for three years to correspond with  
home ;

Not for three years to cross the liberties ;  
Not for three years to speak with any  
men ;

And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards : and 'Now,'  
she cried,

'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.  
Look, our hall !

Our statues !—not of those that men  
desire,

Sleek Odaliskes, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but  
she

That taught the Sabine how to rule, and  
she

The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene

That fought Aurelian, and the Roman  
brows

Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and  
lose

Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O lift your natures  
up :

Embrace our aims : work out your free-  
dom. Girls,

Knowledge is now no more a fountain  
seal'd :

Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us : you may  
go :

To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal : back again we crost the court  
To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morning  
doves

That sun their milky bosoms on the  
thatch,

A patient range of pupils : she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-  
eyed,

And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
Aglaia slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the  
dame

That whisper'd 'Asses' ears,' among the  
sedge,

'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's  
fair,'

Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush !' and she  
began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of  
light,  
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast

The planets : then the monster, then the  
man ;

Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
Raw from the prime, and crushing down  
his mate ;

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and  
here

Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took

A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious  
past ;

Glanced at the legendary Amazon

As emblematic of a nobler age ;

Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of  
those

That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;  
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman  
lines

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
How far from just ; till warming with her  
theme

She fulmined out her scorn of laws Salique  
And little-footed China, touch'd on  
Mahomet

With much contempt, and came to  
chivalry :

When some respect, however slight, was  
paid

To woman, superstition all awry :

However then commenced the dawn : a  
beam

Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep,  
indeed,

Their debt of thanks to her who first had  
dared

To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
Disyoke their necks from custom, and  
assert

None lordlier than themselves but that  
which made

Woman and man. She had founded ;  
they must build.

Here might they learn whatever men were  
taught :

Let them not fear : some said their heads  
were less :

Some men's were small ; not they the  
least of men ;

For often fineness compensated size :

Besides the brain was like the hand, and  
grew

With using ; thence the man's, if more  
was more ;

He took advantage of his strength to be  
First in the field ; some ages had been lost ;  
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
Was longer ; and albeit their glorious  
names

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in  
truth

The highest is the measure of the man,  
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the  
glebe,

But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so  
With woman : and in arts of government  
Elizabeth and others ; arts of war

The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace  
Sappho and others vied with any man :

And, last not least, she who had left her  
place,

And bow'd her state to them, that they  
might grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the  
blight

Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
Dilating on the future ; ' everywhere  
Two heads in council, two beside the  
hearth,

Two in the tangled business of the world,  
Two in the liberal offices of life,

Two plummets dropt for one to sound  
the abyss

Of science, and the secrets of the mind :  
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :  
And everywhere the broad and bounteous  
Earth

Should bear a double growth of those  
rare souls,

Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood  
of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us : the  
rest

Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome,  
she

Began to address us, and was moving on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all  
 her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she  
 cried  
 'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,'  
 she said,  
 'What do you here? and in this dress?  
 and these?'  
 Why who are these? a wolf within the  
 fold!  
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious  
 to me!  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!' 'No  
 plot, no plot,' he answer'd.  
 'Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on the  
 gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF  
 DEATH?'  
 'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could  
 think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of  
 men?'  
 'But you will find it otherwise' she said.  
 'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools!  
 my vow  
 Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,  
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
 The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take  
 my life,  
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning: bury me beside the gate,  
 And cut this epitaph above my bones;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
 All for the common good of womankind.'*  
 'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having  
 seen  
 And heard the Lady Psyche.'  
 I struck in:  
 'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the  
 truth;  
 Receive it; and in me behold the Prince  
 Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,  
 And thus (what other way was left) I  
 came.'

'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country;  
 none;  
 If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was  
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not  
 breathe  
 Within this vestal limit, and how should  
 I,  
 Who am not mine, say, live: the thunder-  
 bolt  
 Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it  
 falls.'  
 'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription  
 there,  
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
 To scare the fowl from fruit: if more  
 there be,  
 If more and acted on, what follows? war;  
 Your own work marr'd: for this your  
 Academe,  
 Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and  
 pass  
 With all fair theories only made to gild  
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess  
 judge  
 Of that' she said: 'farewell, Sir—and  
 to you.  
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I re-  
 join'd,  
 'The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
 (The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
 As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he  
 fell,  
 And all else fled? we point to it, and  
 we say,  
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
 But branches current yet in kindred  
 veins.'  
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added;  
 'she  
 With whom I sang about the morning  
 hills,  
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the  
 purple fly,

And snared the squirrel of the glen? are  
you

That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing  
brow,

To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming  
draught

Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are  
you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you  
now?'

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for  
whom

I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,  
'That on her bridal morn before she past  
From all her old companions, when the  
king

Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that  
ancient ties

Would still be dear beyond the southern  
hills;

That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them? look! for such are these  
and I.'

'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,  
'to whom,

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and  
the blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you  
wept.

That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet  
you wept.

O by the bright head of my little niece,  
You were that Psyche, and what are  
you now?'

'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,  
'The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
That ever crow'd for kisses.'

'Out upon it!'

She answer'd, 'peace! and why should  
I not play

T

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
Him you call great: he for the common  
weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
As I might slay this child, if good need  
were,

Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on  
whom

The secular emancipation turns  
Of half this world, be swerved from right  
to save

A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for  
you.

O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear  
My conscience will not count me fleck-  
less; yet—

Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise  
You perish) as you came, to slip away  
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be  
said,

These women were too barbarous, would  
not learn;

They fled, who might have shamed us:  
promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised each;  
and she,

Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
commenced.

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
By Florian; holding out her lily arms  
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly  
said:

'I knew you at the first: tho' you have  
grown

You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and  
glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to death  
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.  
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
Our mother, is she well?'

With that she kiss'd

His forehead, then, a moment after, clung  
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd  
up

From out a common vein of memory  
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the  
hearth,

N

And far allusion, till the gracious dew  
 Began to glisten and to fall : and while  
 They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a  
 voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady  
 Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round we  
 saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she  
 stood,

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
 That clad her like an April daffodilly  
 (Her mother's colour) with her lips apart,  
 And all her thoughts as fair within her  
 eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the  
 door:

Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah—Melissa—you !  
 You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon  
 me

I heard, I could not help it, did not  
 wish :

But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
 Nor think I bear that heart within my  
 breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'  
 'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two  
 Were always friends, none closer, elm  
 and vine :

But yet your mother's jealous tempera-  
 ment—

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse,  
 or prove

The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
 My honour, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear  
 me not'

Replied Melissa ; 'no—I would not tell,  
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those  
 hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'  
 'Be it so' the other, 'that we still may  
 lead

The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'

Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar : nor should you  
 (Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we*  
 would ask)

Less welcome find among us, if you came  
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
 Myself for something more.' He said  
 not what,

But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go: we have  
 been too long

Together: keep your hoods about the  
 face ;

They do so that affect abstraction here.  
 Speak little ; mix not with the rest ; and  
 hold

Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be  
 well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the  
 child,

And held her round the knees against his  
 waist,

And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,  
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and  
 the child

Push'd her flat hand against his face and  
 laugh'd ;

And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd  
 For half the day thro' stately theatres  
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat,  
 we heard

The grave Professor. On the lecture  
 slate

The circle rounded under female hands  
 With flawless demonstration: follow'd  
 then

A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out  
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words  
 long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
 Time

Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame, the  
 rock,



The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,  
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
 And whatsoever can be taught and known;  
 Till like three horses that have broken fence,  
 And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,  
 We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke:  
 'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.'  
 'They hunt old trails' said Cyril 'very well;  
 But when did woman ever yet invent?'  
 'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian; 'have you learnt  
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd  
 The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?'  
 'O trash' he said, 'but with a kernel in it.  
 Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?  
 And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,  
 Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
 And round these halls a thousand baby loves  
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
 Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O  
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
 The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;  
 He cleft me thro' the stomach; and now  
 What think you of it, Florian? do I chase  
 The substance or the shadow? will it hold?  
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
 No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
 Flatter myself that always everywhere  
 I know the substance when I see it. Well,

Are castles shadows? Three of them?  
 Is she  
 The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,  
 Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?  
 For dear are those three castles to my wants,  
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
 And two dear things are one of double worth,  
 And much I might have said, but that my zone  
 Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear  
 The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants  
 Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou,  
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;  
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet  
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;  
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose  
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out of time  
 Will wonder why they came: but hark the bell  
 For dinner, let us go!' And in we stream'd  
 Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair  
 In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
 How might a man not wander from his wits  
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own  
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors: they, the while,

Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :  
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
terms

Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone  
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,  
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace  
Concluded, and we sought the gardens :  
there

One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
In this hand held a volume as to read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down  
with that :

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some  
hid and sought

In the orange thickets : others tost a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
With laughter : others lay about the  
lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their  
May

Was passing : what was learning unto  
them ?

They wish'd to marry ; they could rule a  
house ;

Men hated learned women : but we three  
Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often  
came

Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
That harm'd not : then day droopt ; the  
chapel bells

Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mixt  
with those

Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
Before two streams of light from wall to  
wall,

While the great organ almost burst his  
pipes,

Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the  
court

A long melodious thunder to the sound  
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
The work of Ida, to call down from  
Heaven

A blessing on her labours for the world.

## III

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea !  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
Blow him again to me ;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west  
Under the silver moon :  
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Morn in the white wake of the morning  
star

Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
We rose, and each by other drest with  
care

Descended to the court that lay three parts  
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
touch'd

Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount,  
and watch'd

Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,  
approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of  
sleep,

Or grief, and glowing round her dewy  
eyes

The circled Iris of a night of tears ;  
'And fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet  
you may !

My mother knows : ' and when I ask'd  
her 'how,'

'My fault' she wept 'my fault ! and yet  
not mine ;

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon  
me.

My mother, 'tis her wont from night to  
night

To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
She says the Princess should have been  
the Head,

Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;

And so it was agreed when first they came ;

But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;  
Hers more than half the students, all the love.

And so last night she fell to canvass you :  
*Her* countrywomen ! she did not envy her.

"Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?  
Girls ?—more like men !" and at these words the snake,

My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;  
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek

Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye

To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :

"O marvellously modest maiden, you !  
Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men

You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus

For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed

That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
What looks so little graceful : "men"  
(for still

My mother went revolving on the word)  
"And so they are,—very like men indeed—

And with that woman closeted for hours !" Then came these dreadful words out one by one,

"Why—these—*are*—men : " I shudder'd :  
"and you know it."

"O ask me nothing," I said : "And she knows too,  
And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd

The truth at once, but with no word from me ;

And now thus early risen she goes to inform

The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush'd ;

But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :

But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ?'

Said Cyril : 'Pale one, blush again : than wear

Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven'

He added, 'lest some classic Angel speak  
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-  
medes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."  
But I will melt this marble into wax

To yield us farther furlough : ' and he went.

    Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought

He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,

'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'

'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two

Division smoulders hidden ; 'tis my mother,

Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :  
I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;  
And still she rail'd against the state of things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.

But when your sister came she won the heart

Of Ida : they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inosculated ;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note ;  
One mind in all things : yet my mother still

Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,  
And angled with them for her pupil's love :  
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :  
But I must go : I dare not tarry,' and light,

As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,

'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.

If I could love, why this were she : how  
     pretty  
 Her blushing was, and how she blush'd  
     again,  
 As if to close with Cyril's random wish :  
 Not like your Princess cramm'd with  
     erring pride,  
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in  
     tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of  
     the crane,  
 The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
 An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
 My princess, O my princess ! true she errs,  
 But in her own grand way : being herself  
 Three times more noble than three score  
     of men,  
 She sees herself in every woman else,  
 And so she wears her error like a crown  
 To blind the truth and me : for her, and  
     her,  
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
 The nectar ; but—ah she—whene'er she  
     moves  
 The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
 A Memnon smitten with the morning  
     Sun.'

So saying from the court we paced,  
     and gain'd  
 The terrace ranged along the Northern  
     front,  
 And leaning there on those balusters, high  
 Above the empurpled champaign, drank  
     the gale  
 That blown about the foliage underneath,  
 And sated with the innumerable rose,  
 Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
 Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he  
     cried ;  
 'No fighting shadows here ! I forced a  
     way  
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.  
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and  
     thump  
 A league of street in summer solstice  
     down,  
 Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
     woman.

I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found  
     her there

At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
 The green malignant light of coming  
     storm.

Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-  
     oil'd,

As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek I  
     pray'd

Concealment : she demanded who we  
     were,

And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,  
 But, your example pilot, told her all.

Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and  
     eye.

But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
 I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
 And our three lives. True—we had  
     limed ourselves

With open eyes, and we must take the  
     chance.

But such extremes, I told her, well might  
     harm

The woman's cause. "Not more than  
     now," she said,

"So puddled as it is with favouritism."

I tried the mother's heart. Shame might  
     befall

Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :  
 Her answer was "Leave me to deal with  
     that."

I spoke of war to come and many deaths,  
 And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.

I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew  
 No rock so hard but that a little wave  
 May beat admission in a thousand years,  
 I recommenced ; "Decide not ere you  
     pause.

I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third—the authentic found-  
     ress you.

I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :  
 Wink at our advent : help my prince to  
     gain

His rightful bride, and here I promise  
     you

Some palace in our land, where you shall  
     reign

The head and heart of all our fair she-  
world,

And your great name flow on with broad-  
ening time

For ever." Well, she balanced this a  
little,

And told me she would answer us to-day,  
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more  
I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from the  
Head.

'That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.

Would we go with her? we should find  
the land

Worth seeing; and the river made a fall  
Out yonder:' then she pointed on to  
where

A double hill-ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the  
vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'  
all

Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch we went.

She stood

Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on  
one

Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he  
roll'd

And paw'd about her sandal. I drew  
near;

I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure  
came

Upon me, the weird vision of our house :  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens, empty  
masks,

And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet  
I felt

My heart beat thick with passion and  
with awe;

Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Brake, as she smote me with the light of  
eyes

That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
shook

My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said :  
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us  
not

Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;  
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No—not to her,'  
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the  
thing you say.'

'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-  
dresses

From him to me? we give you, being  
strange,

A license : speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could  
have wish'd—

'Our king expects—was there no pre-  
contract?

There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but  
long'd

To follow : surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to  
death,

Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read  
—no books?

Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals  
in that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have  
been :

We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt  
with them :

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to  
do it,

Being other—since we learnt our meaning  
here,

To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile  
 'And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,  
 At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,  
 O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summon'd out  
 She kept her state, and left the drunken king  
 To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.'

'Alas your Highness breathes full East,' I said,  
 'On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,  
 I prize his truth : and then how vast a work  
 To assail this gray preëminence of man !  
 You grant me license ; might I use it ? think ;  
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail ;  
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,  
 And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains  
 May only make that footprint upon sand  
 Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
 Resmooth to nothing : might I dread that you,  
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,  
 Love, children, happiness ?'

And she exclaim'd,  
 'Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild !  
 What ! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,  
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?  
 You are bold indeed : we are not talk'd to thus :  
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew  
 Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well :  
 But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die ;  
 They with the sun and moon renew their light  
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.  
 Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—  
 O—children—there is nothing upon earth  
 More miserable than she that has a son  
 And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;  
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,  
 Who learns the one FOR US whenceafter-hands  
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect  
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living, each, a thousand years,  
 That we might see our own work out, and watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
 If that strange Poet-princess with her grand  
 Imaginations might at all be won.  
 And she broke out interpreting my thoughts :

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you ;  
 We are used to that : for women, up till this  
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.  
 If we could give them surer, quicker proof—  
 Oh if our end were less achievable



By slow approaches, than by single act  
Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the  
pikes,  
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black  
blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the  
woods,

And danced the colour, and, below, stuck  
out

The bones of some vast bulk that lived  
and roar'd

Before man was. She gazed awhile and  
said,

'As these rude bones to us, are we to  
her

That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,'  
I ask'd,

'Which wrought us, as the workman and  
his work,

That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried,  
'you love

The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,  
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald  
plane

Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the  
life;

She rapt upon her subject, he on her:  
For there are schools for all.' 'And yet'  
I said

'Methinks I have not found among them  
all

One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of  
that,'

She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in  
truth

We shudder but to dream our maids  
should ape

Those monstrous males that carve the  
living hound,

And cram him with the fragments of the  
grave,

Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
And holy secrets of this microcosm,

Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful  
jest,

Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know  
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter  
hangs:

Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
Nor willing men should come among us,  
learnt,

For many weary moons before we came,  
This craft of healing. Were you sick,  
ourselves

Would tend upon you. To your question  
now,

Which touches on the workman and his  
work.

Let there be light and there was light:  
'tis so:

For was, and is, and will be, are but is;  
And all creation is one act at once,

The birth of light: but we that are not all,  
As parts, can see but parts, now this,  
now that,

And live, perforce, from thought to  
thought, and make

One act a phantom of succession; thus  
Our weakness somehow shapes the  
shadow, Time;

But in the shadow will we work, and  
mould

The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake  
With kindled eyes: we rode a league  
beyond,

And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing,  
came

On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet' I said  
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)

'To linger here with one that loved us.'  
'Yea,'

She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies  
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields  
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,  
Where paced the Demigods of old, and  
saw

The soft white vapour streak the crowned  
towers

Built to the Sun:' then, turning to her  
maids,

'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;

Lay out the viands: At the word, they  
 raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she  
 stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
 The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd  
 there  
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand  
 hymns,  
 And all the men mourn'd at his side: but  
 we  
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril  
 kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the  
 rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
 In the dark crag: and then we turn'd,  
 we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony  
 names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap  
 and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and fell,  
 and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the  
 lawns.

## IV

The splendour falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story:  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O bark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:  
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 They faint on hill or field or river:  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow for ever and for ever.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call  
 the Sun,  
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound'  
 Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and  
 we  
 Down from the lean and wrinkled preci-  
 pices,  
 By every 'coppice-feather'd chasm and  
 cleft,  
 Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where  
 below  
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the  
 tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd  
 on me,  
 Descending; once or twice she lent her  
 hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and  
 dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
 There leaning deep in broider'd down we  
 sank  
 Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and  
 gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us:  
 lightlier move  
 The minutes fledged with music:' and a  
 maid,  
 Of those beside her, smote her harp, and  
 sang.

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
 The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
 To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
 The casement slowly grows a glimmering square:  
 So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that the  
tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring  
pearl  
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain  
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed there  
haunt

About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears  
with wool

And so pace by: but thine are fancies  
hatch'd

In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old bygones  
be,

While down the streams that float us each  
and all

To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs  
of ice,

Throne after throne, and molten on the  
waste

Becomes a cloud: for all things serve  
their time

Toward that great year of equal might  
and rights,

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the  
end

Found golden: let the past be past; let  
be

Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough  
kex break

The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown  
goat

Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree  
split

Their monstrous idols, care not while we  
hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle,  
burns

Above the unrisen morrow: 'then to me;  
'Know you no song of your own land,' she  
said,

'Not such as moans about the retrospect,  
But deals with the other distance and the  
hues  
Of promise; not a death's-head at the  
wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,  
What time I watch'd the swallow wing-  
ing south  
From mine own land, part made long  
since, and part  
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and  
light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her  
mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with  
alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant; for still  
my voice  
Rang false: but smiling 'Not for thee,'  
she said,

'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
 Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather,  
     maid,  
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
     crake  
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and  
     this  
 A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,  
 We hold them slight : they mind us of  
     the time  
 When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves  
     are men,  
 That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
 And dress the victim to the offering up.  
 And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
 And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
 Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour once ;  
 She wept her true eyes blind for such a  
     one,  
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She  
     is dead.  
 So they blaspheme the muse ! But great  
     is song  
 Used to great ends : ourself have often  
     tried  
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have  
     dash'd  
 The passion of the prophetess ; for song  
 Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
 Of spirit than to junketing and love.  
 Love is it ? Would this same mock-love,  
     and this  
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter  
     bats,  
 Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
 To be dandled, no, but living wills, and  
     sphered  
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
     Enough !  
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
 Know you no song, the true growth of  
     your soil,  
 That gives the manners of your country-  
     women ?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous  
     head with eyes  
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.

Then while I dragg'd my brains for such  
     a song,  
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass  
     had wrought,  
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, began  
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at  
     him,  
 I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and wann'd  
     and shook ;  
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows ;  
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried ; 'Forbear,  
     Sir' I ;  
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
     and love,  
 I smote him on the breast ; he started  
     up ;  
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd ;  
 Melissa clamour'd 'Flee the death' ; 'To  
     horse'  
 Said Ida ; 'home ! to horse !' and fled,  
     as flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
 When some one batters at the dovecote-  
     doors,  
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,  
 In the pavilion : there like parting hopes  
 I heard them passing from me : hoof by  
     hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge ; and then another  
     shriek,  
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O  
     the Head !'  
 For blind with rage she miss'd the plank,  
     and roll'd  
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow to  
     gloom :  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a  
     blossom'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall : a glance I gave,  
 No more ; but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I  
     caught her ; then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half the  
     world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree

Was half-disrooted from his place and  
stoop'd  
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling  
wave  
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove  
and caught,  
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd  
the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly  
groug'd  
In the hollow bank. One reaching  
forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms ; they cried  
'she lives' :  
They bore her back into the tent : but I,  
So much a kind of shame within me  
wrought,  
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone  
on foot  
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)  
Across the woods, and less from Indian  
craft  
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at  
length  
The garden portals. Two great statues,  
Art  
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were  
valves  
Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the  
gates.

A little space was left between the  
horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with  
pain,  
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
walks,  
And, tost on thoughts that changed from  
hue to hue,  
Now poring on the glowworm, now the  
star,  
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
wheel'd  
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step  
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain  
gloom,  
Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this  
were she,'  
But it was Florian. 'Hist O hist,' he  
said,  
'They seek us : out so late is out of  
rules.  
Moreover "seize the strangers" is the cry.  
How came you here ?' I told him : 'I'  
said he,  
'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart,  
return'd.  
Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each  
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of  
all,  
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at  
first  
Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar  
with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there ; she  
call'd  
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to  
face ;  
And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are  
fled :  
What, if together ? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come ! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more  
, than I  
That struck him : this is proper to the  
clown,  
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still  
the clown,

To harm the thing that trusts him, and to  
shame

That which he says he loves : for Cyril,  
howe'er

He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in  
grosser lips

Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he.  
He has a solid base of temperament :  
But as the waterlily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a  
tamarisk near

Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
'Names':

He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but I  
began

To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and race  
By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ;  
behind

I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and  
known.

They haled us to the Princess where  
she sat

High in the hall : above her droop'd a  
lamp,

And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-  
head,

Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each  
side

Bow'd toward her, combing out her long  
black hair

Damp from the river ; and close behind  
her stood

Eight daughters of the plough, stronger  
than men,

Huge women blowzed with health, and  
wind, and rain,

And labour. Each was like a Druid rock ;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about  
with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing  
clove

An advent to the throne : and therebeside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from  
wrong,

Her round white shoulder shaken with her  
sobs,

Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old  
days :

You prized my counsel, lived upon my  
lips :

I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother : those were gracious  
times.

Then came your new friend : you began  
to change—

I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to  
cool ;

Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all to  
her,

To me you froze : this was my need for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something  
great,

In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve ; and thus a noble  
scheme

Grew up from seed we two long since had  
sown ;

In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden sun :  
We took this palace ; but even from the  
first



You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.

What student came but that you planed her path

To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?  
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;

Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:  
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured,

Long-closeted with her the yesternorn,  
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:

And me none told: not less to an eye like mine

A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot

Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd  
To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall hear of it

From Lady Psyche:" you had gone to her,

Shetold, perforce; and winning easy grace,  
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us

In our young nursery still unknown, the stem

Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat

Were all miscounted as malighant haste  
To push my rival out of place and power.  
But public use required she should be known;

And since my oath was ta'en for public use,

I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,

Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;

And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)

I came to tell you; found that you had gone,

Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,

That surely she will speak; if not, then I:

Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,

According to the coarseness of their kind,  
For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)

And full of cowardice and guilty shame,  
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;

And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,

I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,

And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast:

Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
For every gust of chance, and men will say  
We did not know the real light, but chased  
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.'

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, 'Good:

Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)

Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,

And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.

'The plan was mine. I built the nest' she said

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while

We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear

Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face,  
and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the  
Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrath-  
ful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself, the  
rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
heavens ;

For anger most it seem'd, while now her  
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her  
heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;

The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ; she  
crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should  
say

' Read,' and I read—two letters—one her  
sire's.

' Fair daughter, when we sent the  
Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws, which  
learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are  
built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong ; but fell  
Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running  
thus :

' You have our son : touch not a hair of  
his head :

Render him up unscathed : give him your  
hand :

Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we  
hear

You hold the woman is the better man ;  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
Would make all women kick against their  
Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might well  
deserve

That we this night should pluck your  
palace down ;

And we will do it, unless you send us back  
Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read ;  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

' O not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
The child of regal compact, did I break  
Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex  
But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,  
Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your  
wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a  
life

Less mine than yours : my nurse would  
tell me of you ;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stoop'd  
to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost  
south

And blown to inmost north ; at eve and  
dawn

With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;  
The leader wildswan in among the stars  
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of  
glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had  
you been

Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the en-  
throned

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
A man I came to see you : but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full  
tongue,

O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait

On you, their centre : let me say but this,  
That many a famous man and woman,  
town

And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
The dwarfs of presage : tho' when known,  
there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
Made them worth knowing ; but in you  
I found

My boyish dream involved and dazzled  
down

And master'd, while that after-beauty  
makes

Such head from act to act, from hour to  
hour,

Within me, that except you slay me here,  
According to your bitter statute-book,  
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
The seal does music ; who desire you  
more

Than growing boys their manhood ; dying  
lips,

With many thousand matters left to do,  
The breath of life ; O more than poor  
men wealth,

Than sick men health—yours, yours, not  
mine—but half

Without you ; with you, whole ; and of  
those halves

You worthiest ; and howe'er you block  
and bar

Your heart with system out from mine, I  
hold

That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
To follow up the worthiest till he die :  
Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee  
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,  
and dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce  
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
As waits a river level with the dam  
Ready to burst and flood the world with  
foam :

And so she would have spoken, but there  
rose

-A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
Gather'd together : from the illumined hall

Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a  
press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded  
ewes,

And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-  
like eyes,

And gold and golden heads ; they to and  
fro

Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,  
some pale,

All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
Some crying there was an army in the  
land,

And some that men were in the very  
walls,

And some they cared not ; till a clamour  
grew

As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
And worse-confounded : high above them  
stood

The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head : but  
rising up

Robed in the long night of her deep hair,  
so

To the open window moved, remaining  
there

Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the  
light

Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd  
her arms and call'd

Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

'What fear, ye, brawlers? am not I  
your Head?

On me, me, me, the storm first breaks :  
I dare

All these male thunderbolts : what is it  
ye fear?

Peace ! there are those to avenge us and  
they come :

If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die : yet I blame you not so much for  
fear ;

Six thousand years of fear have made you  
that  
From which I would redeem you : but  
for those  
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I  
know  
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow  
morn  
We hold a great convention : then shall  
they  
That love their voices more than duty,  
learn  
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame  
to live  
No wiser than their mothers, household  
stuff,  
Live chattels, mincers of each other's  
fame,  
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks  
of Time,  
Whose brains are in their hands and in  
their heels,  
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to  
thrum,  
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to  
scour,  
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat  
the crowd  
Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile,  
that look'd  
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
When all the glens are drown'd in azure  
gloom  
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and  
said :

'You have done well and like a  
gentleman,  
And like a prince : you have our thanks  
for all :  
And you look well too in your woman's  
dress :  
Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
You saved our life : we owe you bitter  
thanks :  
Better have died and spilt our bones in  
the flood—

Then men had said—but now—What  
hinders me  
To take such bloody vengeance on you  
both?—  
Yet since our father—Wasps in our good  
hive,  
You would-be quenchers of the light to  
be,  
Barbarians, grosser than your native  
bears—  
O would I had his sceptre for one hour !  
You that have dared to break our bound,  
and gull'd  
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and  
thwarted us—  
I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract  
Your bride, your bonds slave ! not tho' all  
the gold  
That veins the world were pack'd to  
make your crown,  
And every spoken tongue should lord  
you. Sir,  
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful  
to us :

I trample on your offers and on you :  
Begone : we will not look upon you more.  
Here, push them out at gates.'  
In wrath she spake.  
Then those eight mighty daughters of the  
plough  
Bent their broad faces toward us and  
address'd  
Their motion : twice I sought to plead  
my cause,  
But on my shoulder hung their heavy  
hands,  
The weight of destiny : so from her face  
They push'd us, down the steps, and  
thro' the court,  
And with grim laughter thrust us out at  
gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty  
mound  
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and  
heard  
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,  
came  
On a sudden the weird seizure and the  
doubt :

I seem'd to move among a world of  
ghosts ;  
The Princess with her monstrous woman-  
guard,  
The ~~jest~~ and earnest working side by side,  
The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
Were shadows ; and the long fantastic  
night  
With all its doings had and had not been,  
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;  
Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of  
doubts  
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
To whom the touch of all mischance but  
came  
As night to him that sitting on a hill  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway  
sun  
Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,  
That beat to battle where he stands ;  
Thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands :  
A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee ;  
The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-  
possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury thro' the  
words ;  
And, after, feigning pique at what she  
call'd  
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sub-  
lime—  
Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
The music—clapt her hands and cried  
for war,  
Or some grand fight to kill and make an  
end :  
And he that next inherited the tale  
Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
' Sir Ralph has got your colours : if I  
prove  
- Your knight, and fight your battle, what  
for me ? '

It chanced, her empty glove upon the  
tomb  
Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
She took it and she flung it. ' Fight '  
she said,  
' And make us all we would be, great  
and good.'  
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed the  
Prince.

v

Now, scarce three paces measured from  
the mound,  
We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
And ' Stand, who goes ? ' ' Two from the  
palace ' I.  
' The second two : they wait, ' he said,  
' pass on ;  
His Highness wakes : ' and one, that  
clash'd in arms,  
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas  
led  
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
The drowsy folds of our great ensign  
shake  
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
Dazed me half-blind : I stood and seem'd  
to hear,  
As in a poplar grove when a light wind  
wakes  
A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
Each hissing in his neighbour's ear ; and  
then  
A strangled titter, out of which there  
brake  
On all sides, clamouring etiquette to  
death,  
Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two  
old kings  
Began to wag their baldness up and down,  
The fresh young captains flash'd their  
glittering teeth,  
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
and blew,  
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded  
Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek  
wet with tears,  
Panted from weary sides 'King, you are  
free !

We did but keep you surety for our son,  
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,  
thou,

That tends her bristled grunters in the  
sludge :'

For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn  
with briers,

More crumpled than a poppy from the  
sheath,

And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to  
heel.

Then some one sent beneath his vaulted  
palm

A whisper'd jest to some one near him,  
'Look,

He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan  
take

The old women and their shadows ! (thus  
the King

Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with  
men.

Go : Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink

From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a trice

From what was left of faded woman-  
slough

To sheathing splendours and the golden  
scale

Of harness, issued in the sun, that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the

Earth,

And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril  
met us.

A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and  
given

For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
whereon

Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping : 'then we  
fell

Into your father's hand, and there she  
lies,

But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent

A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and there  
Among piled arms and rough accoutre-  
ments,

Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from  
head to foot,

And push'd by rude hands from its  
pedestal,

All her fair length upon the ground she  
lay :

And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of woman-  
hood,

Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come' he  
whisper'd to her,

'Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie not  
thus.

What have you done but right ? you could  
not slay

Me, nor your prince : look up : be com-  
forted :

Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
When fall'n in darker ways.' And like-  
wise I :

'Be comforted : have I not lost her too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless  
charm

That none has else for me ?' She heard,  
she moved,

She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up she  
sat,

And raised the cloak from brows as pale  
and smooth

As those that mourn half-shrouded over  
death

In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said,  
'my friend—

Parted from her—betray'd her cause and  
mine—

Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye not  
your faith ?

O base and bad ! what comfort ? none  
for me !'

To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray  
Take comfort : live, dear lady, for your  
child !'

At which she lifted up her voice and cried.



'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,  
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!

For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
And either she will die from want of care,  
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little fault,  
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl

Remembering her mother: O my flower!  
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,

And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,

The horror of the shame among them all:  
But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
And make a wild petition night and day,  
Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child:  
And I will take her up and go my way,  
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:  
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me

Who gave me back my child?' 'Be comforted,'

Said Cyril, 'you shall have it:' but again  
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank,  
and so

Like tender things that being caught feign death,

Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran  
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts

With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
We left her by the woman, and without  
Found the gray kings at parle: and 'Look you' cried

My father 'that our compact be fulfill'd:  
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:

But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;

She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me:  
'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time

With our strange girl: and yet they say that still

You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:

How say you, war or not?'

'Not war, if possible,  
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of war,

The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,  
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her  
Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn

At him that mars her plan, but then would hate

(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
And every face she look'd on justify it)  
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,

By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd  
Your cities into shards with catapults,  
She would not love;—or brought her chain'd, a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
Not ever would she love; but brooding turn

The book of scorn, till all my fitting chance

Were caught within the record of her wrongs,

And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this

I would the old God of war himself were dead,

Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,

Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,

Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake  
My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the  
girls.'

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
That idiot legend credible. Look you,  
Sir!

Man is the hunter; woman is his game:  
The sleek and shining creatures of the  
chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their  
skins;

They love us for it, and we ride them  
down.

Wheedling and siding with them! Out!  
for shame!

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to  
them

As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,  
comes

With the air of the trumpet round him,  
and leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the  
score

Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd  
with death

He reddens what he kisses: thus I won  
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
Worth winning; but this firebrand—  
gentleness

To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,  
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea but Sire,' I cried,  
'Wild natures need wise curbs. The  
soldier? No:

What dares not Ida do that she should  
prize

The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,  
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
down

Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the  
death,

No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,  
True woman: but you clash them all in  
one,

That have as many differences as we.  
The violet varies from the lily as far.

As oak from elm: one loves the soldier,  
one

The silken priest of peace, one this, one  
that,

And some unworthily; their sinless faith,  
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they  
need

More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?  
They worth it? truer to the law within?  
Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
Of earth and heaven? and she of whom  
you speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
Creation minted in the golden moods  
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a  
touch,

But pure as lines of green that streak the  
white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,  
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual  
mire,

But whole and one: and take them all—  
in-all,

Were we ourselves but half as good, askind,  
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly  
theirs

As dues of Nature. To our point: not  
war:

Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense'  
Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself  
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him  
then

This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;  
And there is something in it as you say:  
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for  
it.—

He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,  
Our own detention, why, the causes  
weigh'd,

Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,

You did but come as goblins in the night,  
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's  
head,

Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the  
milking-maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of  
cream :

But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
He comes back safe) ride with us to our  
lines,

And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice  
As ours with Ida : something may be  
done—

I know not what—and ours shall see us  
friends.

You, likewise, our late guests, if so you  
will,

Follow us : who knows ? we four may  
build some plan

Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who  
growl'd

An answer which, half-muffled in his  
beard,

Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across  
the lawns

Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of  
Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and  
woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised help,  
and oozed

All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode  
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy  
dews

Gather'd by night and peace, with each  
light air

On our mail'd heads : but other thoughts  
than Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled  
squares,

And squadrons of the Prince, trampling  
the flowers

With clamour : for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king ; they made a halt ;

The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their arms ;  
the drum

Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial  
fife ;

And in the blast and bray of the long  
horn

And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner : anon to meet us lightly  
pranced

Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men : the midmost and the  
highest

Was Arac : all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made  
them glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's  
zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as  
they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I  
heard

War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
force,

Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike : then took the king  
His three broad sons ; with now a wander-  
ing hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all :  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy  
jest

Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,  
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in  
words.

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he  
himself

Your captive, yet my father wills not war :  
And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war  
or no ?

But then this question of your troth re-  
mains :

And there's a downright honest meaning  
in her ;

She flies too high, she flies too high ! and  
yet

She ask'd but space and fairplay for her  
scheme ;

She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things ? but, life  
and soul !

I thought her half-right talking of her  
wrongs ;

I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of  
that ?

I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
And Prince, she can be sweet to those  
she loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not : this is  
all,

I stand upon her side : she made me  
swear it—

'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by candle-  
light—

Swear by St. something—I forget her  
name—

Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;  
*She* was a princess too ; and so I swore.  
Come, this is all ; she will not : waive  
your claim :

If not, the foughten field, what else, at  
once

Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's  
will.'

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper  
yet ;

Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat 'Like to like !  
The woman's garment hid the woman's  
heart.'

A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a  
blow !

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the  
point

Where idle boys are cowards to their  
shame,

'Decide it here : why not ? we are three  
to three.'

Then spake the third 'But three to  
three ? no more ?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?  
More, more, for honour : every captain  
waits

Hungry for honour, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
May breathe himself, and quick ! by over-  
throw

Of these or those, the question settled die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wreath  
of air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honour, if ye  
will.

It needs must be for honour if at all :  
Since, what decision ? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail : she would not  
keep

Her compact.' 'Sdeath ! but we will  
send to her,'

Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue : let our missive thro',  
And you shall have her answer by the  
word.'

'Boys !' shriek'd the old king, but  
vainlier than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool ; for  
none

Regarded ; neither seem'd there more to  
say :

Back rode we to my father's camp, and  
found

He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life : three times  
he went :

The first, he blew and blew, but none  
appear'd :

He batter'd at the doors ; none came :  
the next,

An awful voice within had warn'd him  
thence :

The third, and those eight daughters of  
the plough

Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught  
his hair,

And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild : not less one glance  
he caught

Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the  
noise

Of arms ; and standing like a stately Pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right  
and left

Suck'd from the dark heart of the long  
hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet  
her will

Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was  
pledged,

To fight in tourney for my bride, he  
clash'd

His iron palms together with a cry ;  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads :  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state,  
perforce

He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce  
demur :

And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And sware to combat for my claim till  
death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise  
here,

Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with  
Tomyris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd  
up,

And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance, went and  
came ;

Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling  
words

Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

' O brother, you have known the pangs  
we felt,

What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's  
feet ;

Of lands in which at the altar the poor  
bride

Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a  
scourge ;

Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and  
of those,—

Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood,  
and swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion : and I saw

That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smoother men : the old heaven  
leaven'd all :

Millions of throats would bawl for civil  
rights,

No woman named : therefore I set my  
face

Against all men, and lived but for mine  
own.

Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
I stored it full of rich memorial :

I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey  
And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys  
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd  
our peace,

Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know  
not what

Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings !—for  
their sport !—

I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame  
these ?

Or you ? or I ? for since you think me  
touch'd

In honour—what, I would not aught of  
false—

Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I  
know

Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's  
blood

You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide



What end soever : fail you will not. Still  
 Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;  
 His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,  
 Fight and fight well ; strike and strike  
 home. O dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you,  
 you

The sole men to be mingled with our  
 cause,

The sole men we shall prize in the after-  
 time,

Your very armour hallow'd, and your  
 statues

Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd  
 aside,

We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move  
 With claim on claim from right to right,  
 till she

Whose name is yoked with children's,  
 know herself ;

And Knowledge in our own land make  
 her free,

And, ever following those two crowned  
 twins,

Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery  
 grain

Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern  
 morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across  
 the rest.

'See that there be no traitors in your  
 camp :

We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague  
 of men !

Almost our maids were better at their  
 homes,

Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I  
 think

Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :  
 She shall not have it back : the child  
 shall grow

To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning : there the tender orphan  
 hands

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
 from thence  
 The wrath I nursed against the world :  
 farewell.'

I ceased ; he said, ' Stubborn, but she  
 may sit

Upon a king's right hand in thunder-  
 storms,

And breed up warriors ! See now, tho'  
 yourself

Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
 That swallow common sense, the spind-  
 ling king,

This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.

When the man wants weight, the woman  
 takes it up,

And topples down the scales ; but this is  
 fixt

As are the roots of earth and base of all ;  
 Man for the field and woman for the  
 hearth :

Man for the sword and for the needle she :  
 Man with the head and woman with the  
 heart :

Man to command and woman to obey ;  
 All else confusion. Look you ! the gray  
 mare

Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
 From tile to scullery, and her small good-  
 man

Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires  
 of Hell

Mix with his hearth : but you—she's yet  
 a colt—

Take, break her : strongly groom'd and  
 straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detestable  
 That let the bantling scald at home, and  
 brawl

Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in  
 the street.

They say she's comely ; there's the fairer  
 chance :

I like her none the less for rating at her !  
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
 Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
 The bearing and the training of a child  
 Is woman's wisdom.'



Thus the hard old king :  
 I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :  
 I pored upon her letter which I held,  
 And on the little clause 'take not his life':  
 I mused on that wild morning in the  
     woods,  
 And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt  
     win':  
 I thought on all the wrathful king had  
     said,  
 And how the strange betrothment was to  
     end :  
 Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's  
     curse  
 That one should fight with shadows and  
     should fall ;  
 And like a flash the weird affection came :  
 King, camp and college turn'd to hollow  
     shows ;  
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
 And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
 To dream myself the shadow of a dream :  
 And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied and  
     plumed  
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared  
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
 The trumpet, and again : at which the  
     storm  
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of  
     spears  
 And riders front to front, until they closed  
 In conflict with the crash of shivering  
     points,  
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I  
     dream'd  
 Of fighting. On his haunches rose the  
     steed,  
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
 Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but kept  
     their seats :  
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again  
     and drew :  
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
     horses. Down  
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and  
     down

From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
 The large blows rain'd, as here and every-  
     where  
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing  
     lists,  
 And all the plain,—brand, mace, and  
     shaft, and shield—  
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil  
     bang'd  
 With hammers ; till I thought, can this  
     be he  
 From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,  
 The mother makes us most—and in my  
     dream  
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'  
     eyes,  
 And highest, among the statues, statue-  
     like,  
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,  
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
 A single band of gold about her hair,  
 Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but  
     she  
 No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
 Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me  
     fight,  
 Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I drave  
 Among the thickest and bore down a  
     Prince,  
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my  
     dream  
 All that I would. But that large-moulded  
     man,  
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering-  
     ing back  
 With stroke on stroke the horse and  
     horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the  
     drains,  
 And shadowing down the champaign till  
     it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and  
     cracks, and splits,  
 And twists the grain with such a roar  
     that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry ; for every-  
     thing

Gave way before him : only Florian, he  
 That loved me closer than his own right  
   eye,  
 Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him  
   down :  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the  
   Prince,  
 With Psyche's colour round his helmet,  
   tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at  
   arms ;  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that  
   smote  
 And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I felt  
   my veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand  
   to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse  
   we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade  
   glanced,  
 I did but shear a feather, and dream and  
   truth  
 Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ;  
   and I fell.

## VI

Home they brought her warrior dead :  
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 ' She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee—  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 ' Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

My dream had never died or lived  
   again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay ;  
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :  
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all  
 So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
 That all things grew more tragic and  
   more strange ;  
 That when our side was vanquish'd and  
   my cause  
 For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
 The Prince is slain. My father heard  
   and ran  
 In on the lists, and there unlaced my  
   casque  
 And grovell'd on my body, and after him  
 Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
 With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the  
   roofs  
 Like that great dame of Lapidoth she  
   sang.

' Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,  
 The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
 Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
 Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
 A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

' Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they  
   came ;  
 The leaves were wet with women's tears : they  
   heard  
 A noise of songs they would not understand :  
 They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
 And would have strown it, and are fall'n them-  
   selves.

' Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they  
   came,  
 The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !  
 But we will make it faggots for the hearth,  
 And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
 And boats and bridges for the use of men.

' Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they  
   struck ;  
 With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor  
   knew  
 There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
 The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
 Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

' Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow  
 A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
 Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power : and roll'd  
 With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
 The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
 Shall move the stony bases of the world.

‘And now, O maids, behold our  
 sanctuary  
 Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
 To break them more in their behoof,  
     whose arms  
 Champion’d our cause and won it with a  
     day  
 Blanch’d in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
 When dames and heroines of the golden  
     year  
 Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of  
     Spring,  
 To rain an April of ovation round  
 Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but  
     come,  
 We will be liberal, since our rights are  
     won.  
 Let them not lie in the tents with coarse  
     mankind,  
 Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these  
 The brethren of our blood and cause, that  
     there  
 Lie bruised and maim’d, the tender  
     ministries  
 Of female hands and hospitality.’

She spoke, and with the babe yet in  
 her arms,  
 Descending, burst the great bronze valves,  
     and led  
 A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
 Some cowl’d, and some bare-headed, on  
     they came,  
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by  
     them went  
 The enamour’d air sighing, and on their  
     curls  
 From the high tree the blossom wavering  
     fell,  
 And over them the tremulous isles of light  
 Slided, they moving under shade : but  
     Blanche  
 At distance follow’d : so they came : anon  
 Thro’ open field into the lists they wound  
 Timorously ; and as the leader of the  
     herd  
 That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,  
 And follow’d up by a hundred airy does,  
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,  
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on

To where her wounded brethren lay ;  
     there stay’d ;  
 Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—  
     and prest  
 Their hands, and call’d them dear de-  
     liverers,  
 And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
 And said ‘ You shall not lie in the tents  
     but here,  
 And nursed by those for whom you fought,  
     and served  
 With female hands and hospitality.’

Then, whether moved by this, or was  
 it chance,  
 She past my way. Up started from my  
 side  
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless  
     eye,  
 Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,  
 Dishelm’d and mute, and motionlessly  
     pale,  
 Cold ev’n to her, she sigh’d ; and when  
     she saw  
 The haggard father’s face and reverend  
     beard  
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
 Of his own son, shudder’d, a twitch of pain  
 Tortured her mouth, and o’er her forehead  
     past  
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she  
     said :  
 ‘ He saved my life : my brother slew him  
     for it.’  
 No more : at which the king in bitter  
     scorn  
 Drew from my neck the painting, and the  
     tress,  
 And held them up : she saw them, and a  
     day  
 Rose from the distance on her memory,  
 When the good Queen, her mother, shore  
     the tress  
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :  
 And then once more she look’d at my pale  
     face :  
 Till understanding all the foolish work  
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her mind ;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;

She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ;  
 she laid  
 A feeling finger on my brows, and  
 presently

'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives : he is not  
 dead :

O let me have him with my brethren here  
 In our own palace : we will tend on him  
 Like one of these ; if so, by any means,  
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that  
 make

Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said : but at the happy word 'he  
 lives'

My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my  
 wounds.

So those two foes above my fallen life,  
 With brow to brow like night and evening  
 mixt

Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever  
 stole

A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden  
 brede,

Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
 Unear'd for, spied its mother and began  
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to  
 dance

Its body, and reach its fatling innocent  
 arms

And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamouring out 'Mine—  
 mine—not yours,

It is not yours, but mine : give me the  
 child'

Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the  
 cry :

So stood the unhappy mother open-  
 mouth'd,

And turn'd each face her way : wan was  
 her cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle  
 torn,

Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and  
 half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
 The laces toward her babe ; but she nor  
 cared

Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,  
 stood

Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
 The mother, me, the child ; but he that  
 lay

Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
 Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he  
 drew

Her robe to meet his lips, and down she  
 look'd

At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it  
 seem'd,

Or self-involved ; but when she learnt his  
 face,

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er  
 him grew

Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he  
 said :

'O fair and strong and terrible !  
 Lioness

That with your long locks play the Lion's  
 mane !

But Love and Nature, these are two more  
 terrible

And stronger. See, your foot is on our  
 necks,

We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your  
 will.

What would you more ? give her the  
 child ! remain

Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,  
 Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
 Win you the hearts of women ; and  
 beware

Lest, where you seek the common love  
 of these,

The common hate with the revolving  
 wheel

Should drag you down, and some great  
 Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
 with fire,

And tread you out for ever : but how-  
 so'er

Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,

Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep  
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you  
     loved  
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled  
     you,  
 Or own one port of sense not flint to  
     prayer,  
 Give her the child ! or if you scorn to  
     lay it,  
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with  
     yours,  
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one  
     fault  
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not  
     kill,  
 Give *me* it : *I* will give it her.'

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
 Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and  
     sank  
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing,  
     dwelt  
 Full on the child ; she took it : ' Pretty  
     bud !  
 Lily of the vale ! half open'd bell of the  
     woods !  
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a  
     world  
 Of traitorous friend and broken system  
     made  
 No purple in the distance, mystery,  
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;  
 These men are hard upon us as of old,  
 We two must part : and yet how fain  
     was I  
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine,  
     to think  
 I might be something to thee, when I felt  
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren  
     breast  
 In the dead prime : but may thy mother  
     prove  
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me !  
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke,  
     I wish it  
 Gentle as freedom '—here she kiss'd it :  
     then—  
 ' All good go with thee ! take it Sir,'  
     and so  
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,

Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she  
     sprang  
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in  
     thanks ;  
 Then felt it sound and whole from head  
     to foot,  
 And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close  
     enough,  
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled  
     it,  
 And hid her bosom with it ; after that  
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly :

' We two were friends : I go to mine  
     own land  
 For ever : find some other : as for me  
 I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet  
     speak to me,  
 Say one soft word and let me part for-  
     given.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
 Then Arac. ' Ida—'sdeath ! you blame  
     the man ;  
 You wrong yourselves—the woman is so  
     hard  
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me !  
 I am your warrior : I and mine have fought  
 Your battle : kiss her ; take her hand,  
     she weeps :  
 'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er  
     than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,  
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
     said :

' I've heard that there is iron in the  
     blood,  
 And I believe it. Not one word ? not one ?  
 Whence drew you this steel temper ? not  
     from me,  
 Not from your mother, now a saint with  
     saints.  
 She said you had a heart—I heard her  
     say it—  
 " Our Ida has a heart "—just ere she died—  
 " But see that some one with authority  
 Be near her still " and I—I sought for  
     one—

All people said she had authority—  
 The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not  
     one word;  
 No! tho' your father sues: see how you  
     stand  
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good  
     knights maim'd,  
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
 For your wild whim: and was it then  
     for this,  
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
 Where we withdrew from summer heats  
     and state,  
 And had our wine and chess beneath the  
     planes,  
 And many a pleasant hour with her that's  
     gone,  
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
 Speak to her I say: is this not she of  
     whom,  
 When first she came, all flush'd you said  
     to me  
 Now had you got a friend of your own  
     age,  
 Now could you share your thought; now  
     should men see  
 Two women faster welded in one love  
 Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd  
     with, she  
 You talk'd with, whole nights long, up  
     in the tower,  
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
 And right ascension, Heaven knows what;  
     and now  
 A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
 Not one to spare her: out upon you,  
     flint!  
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,  
 You shame your mother's judgment too.  
     Not one?  
 You will not? well—no heart have you,  
     or such  
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.  
 So said the small king moved beyond his  
     wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her  
     force  
 By many a varying influence and so long.

Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor  
     wept:  
 Her head a little bent; and on her mouth  
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded-  
     moon  
 In a still water: then brake out my sire,  
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds.  
     'O you,  
 Woman, whom we thought woman even  
     now,  
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,  
 Because he might have wish'd it—but we  
     see  
 The accomplice of your madness unfor-  
     given,  
 And think that you might mix his draught  
     with death,  
 When your skies change again: the  
     rougher hand  
 Is safer: on to the tents: take up the  
     Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd  
     to attend  
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd  
     her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more,  
     and shone,  
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.  
     'Come hither.  
 O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me,  
     come,  
 Quick while I melt; make reconciliation  
     sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind an  
     hour:  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so!  
 Kiss and be friends, like children being  
     chid!  
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness too:  
 I should have had to do with none but  
     maids,  
 That have no links with men. Ah false  
     but dear,  
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—  
     why?—Yet see,  
 Before these kings we embrace you yet  
     once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.



And now, O sire,  
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon  
him,  
Like mine own brother. For my debt to  
him,  
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I  
know it ;  
Taunt me no more : yourself and yours  
shall have  
Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids  
Till happier times each to her proper  
hearth :  
What use to keep them here—now?  
grant my prayer.  
Help, father, brother, help ; speak to the  
king :  
Thaw this male nature to some touch of  
that  
Which kills me with myself, and drags  
me down  
From my fixt height to mob me up with all  
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
Poor weakling ev'n as they are.'

Passionate tears

Follow'd : the king replied not : Cyril  
said :

'Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for  
him

Of your great head—for he is wounded  
too—

That you may tend upon him with the  
prince.'

'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,

'Our laws are broken : let him enter  
too.'

Then Violet, she that sang the mournful  
song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she said,

'I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep  
My heart an eddy from the brawling  
hour :

We break our laws with ease, but let it  
be.'

'Ay so?' said Blanche : 'Amazed am I  
to hear

Your Highness : but your Highness  
breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make :  
'twas I.

T

I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
And block'd them out ; but these men  
came to woo

Your Highness—verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye :  
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling  
tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

'Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not  
one, but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or  
foe,

Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by  
us,

The roar that breaks the Pharos from his  
base

Had left us rock. She fain would sting  
us too,

But shall not. Pass, and mingle with  
your likes.

We brook no further insult but are gone.'

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white  
neck

Was rosed with indignation : but the  
Prince

Her brother came ; the king her father  
charm'd

Her wounded soul with words : nor did  
mine own

Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights,  
and bare

Straight to the doors : to them the doors  
gave way

Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
The virgin marble under iron heels :

And on they moved and gain'd the hall,  
and there

Rested : but great the crush was, and  
each base,

To left and right, of those tall columns  
drown'd

In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
Of female whisperers : at the further end

P

Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre  
stood

The common men with rolling eyes ;  
amazed

They glared upon the women, and aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent,  
save

When armour clash'd or jingled while  
the day,

Descending, struck athwart the hall, and  
shot

A flying splendour out of brass and steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head to  
head,

Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then an echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room,  
and died

Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :  
And me they bore up the broad stairs,  
and thro'

The long-laid galleries past a hundred  
doors

To one deep chamber shut from sound,  
and due

To languid limbs and sickness ; left me  
in it ;

And others elsewhere they laid ; and all  
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
Till happier times ; but some were left of  
those

Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
From those two hosts that lay beside the  
walls,

Walk'd at their will, and everything was  
changed.

## VII

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ;  
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the  
shape

With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;  
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I give ?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :

Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd :

I strove against the stream and all in vain :

Let the great river take me to the main :

No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;

Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;  
At first with all confusion : by and by  
Sweet order lived again with other laws :  
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and every-  
where

Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick : the maidens came,  
they talk'd,

They sang, they read : till she not fair  
began

To gather light, and she that was, became  
Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel  
offices,

Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they  
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with  
shame.

Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke :  
but oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for  
hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field : void was her  
use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great  
black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of  
night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge to  
shore,

And suck the blinding splendour from the  
sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn by  
tarn

Expunge the world : so fared she gazing  
there ;  
So blacken'd all her world in secret,  
blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down  
she came,  
And found fair peace once more among  
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by  
morn the lark  
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,  
but I  
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :  
And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-grown  
the bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves,  
and Heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could  
reach me, lay  
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the  
hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in  
their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her  
oft,  
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but  
left  
Her child among us, willing she should  
keep  
Court-favour : here and there the small  
bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the  
couch,  
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in  
themselves  
To wile the length from languorous hours,  
and draw  
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange  
that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd  
that hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in  
love,

Than when two dewdrops on the petal  
shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper  
down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit ob-  
tain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche  
had sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields  
She needs must wed him for her own good  
name ;  
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but  
fear'd  
To incense the Head once more ; till on  
a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her  
face  
A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent in-  
volved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at  
peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid  
and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,  
Nor did mine own, now reconciled ; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and  
whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :  
Then came a change ; for sometimes I  
would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
'You are not Ida' ; clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seem'd  
a truth :  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my  
mind,

And often she believed that I should die:  
 Till out of long frustration of her care,  
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary  
     noons,  
 And watches in the dead, the dark, when  
     clocks  
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors,  
     or call'd  
 On flying Time from all their silver  
     tongues—  
 And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
 And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
     dream,  
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
 And wordless broodings on the wasted  
     cheek—  
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to  
     these,  
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with  
     tears  
 Bysome cold morning glacier; frail at first  
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
 But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close  
     to death  
 For weakness: it was evening: silent light  
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein were  
     wrought  
 Two grand designs; for on one side arose  
 The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
 At the Opian law. Titanic shapes, they  
     cramm'd  
 The forum, and half-crush'd among the  
     rest  
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other  
     side  
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,  
 A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman  
     scowls,  
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their  
     veins,  
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them  
     paused  
 Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I  
     was:  
 They did but look like hollow shows;  
     nor more  
 Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew  
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
 And rounder seem'd: I moved: I sigh'd:  
     a touch  
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon my  
     hand:  
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
 Mine down my face, and with what life I  
     had,  
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisper-  
     ingly:

'If you be, what I think you, some  
     sweet dream,  
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
 I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,  
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
     to-night.  
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I  
     die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in  
     trance,  
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his  
     friends,  
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make  
     one sign,  
 But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd;  
     she paused;  
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a  
     cry;  
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of  
     death;  
 And I believed that in the living world  
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;  
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she  
     rose  
 Glowing all over noble shame; and all  
 Her falsar self slipt from her like a robe,  
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
 Than in her mould that other, when she  
     came

From barren deeps to conquer all with  
love ;

And down the streaming crystal dropt ;  
and she

Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd  
her out

For worship without end ; nor end of mine ;  
Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided  
forth,

Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and  
slept,

Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy  
sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near  
me, held

A volume of the Poets of her land :  
There to herself, all in low tones, she  
read.

' Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;  
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;  
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :  
The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
And slips into the bosom of the lake :  
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page ; she found  
a small  
Sweet idyl, and once more, as low, she  
read :

' Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain  
height :  
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)  
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease  
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down

And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley ; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,  
That like a broken purpose waste in air :  
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales  
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned ; while with shut  
eyes I lay

Listening ; then look'd. Pale was the  
perfect face ;

The bosom with long sighs labour'd ; and  
meek

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the lumi-  
nous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.  
She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
In sweet humility ; had fail'd in all ;  
That all her labour was but as a block  
Left in the quarry ; but she still were loth,  
She still were loth to yield herself to one  
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal  
rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous  
laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their cause  
from her

That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth  
than power

In knowledge : something wild within  
her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat her  
down.

And she had nursed me there from week  
to week :

Much had she learnt in little time. In  
part

It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl—  
' Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of  
farce !

When comes another such ? never, I think,  
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.'

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her  
hands,

And her great heart thro' all the faultful  
Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not  
break ;

Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones,  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :  
She moved, and at her feet the volume  
fell.

' Blame not thyself too much,' I said,  
' nor blame

Too much the sons of men and barbarous  
laws ;

These were the rough ways of the world  
till now.

Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that  
know

The woman's cause is man's : they rise  
or sink

Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or  
free :

For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with  
man

His nights, his days, moves with him to  
one goal,

Stays all the fair young planet in her  
hands—

If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow ? but work no more  
alone !

Our place is much : as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aiding  
her—

Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her  
down—

Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse : could we make her as the  
man,

Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond  
is this,

Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw  
the world ;

She mental breadth, nor fail in childward  
care,

Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words ;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of  
Time,

Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their  
powers,

Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back to  
men :

Then reign the world's great bridals,  
chaste and calm :

Then springs the crowning race of human-  
kind.

May these things be !'

Sighing she spoke ' I fear  
They will not.'

' Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud watch-  
word rest

Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in  
thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one  
full stroke,  
Life.'



And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream  
That once was mine! what woman taught  
you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I  
know,  
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the  
world,  
I loved the woman: he, that doth not,  
lives

A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
Or pines in sad experience worse than  
death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with  
crime:

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved  
her, one

Not learned, save in gracious household  
ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
Who look'd all native to her place, and  
yet

On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
Too gross to tread, and all male minds  
perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as they  
moved,

And girdled her with music. Happy he  
With such a mother! faith in woman-  
kind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all  
things high

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and  
fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

'But I,'

Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—  
It seems you love to cheat yourself with  
words:

This mother is your model. I have  
heard

Of your strange doubts: they well might  
be: I seem

'A mockery to my own self. Never,  
Prince;

You cannot love me.'

'Nay but theë' I said  
'From yearlong poring on thy pictured  
eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,  
and saw

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods  
That mask'd thee from men's reverence  
up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood:  
now,

Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'  
thee,

Indeed I love: the new day comes, the  
light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts  
are dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows: the  
change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd it.  
Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on  
mine,

Like yonder morning on the blind half-  
world;

Approach and fear not; breathe upon  
my brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and  
this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland  
reels

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.  
Forgive me,

I waste my heart in signs: let be. My  
bride,

My wife, my life. O we will walk this  
world,

Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so thro' those dark gates across the  
wild

That no man knows. Indeed I love  
thee: come,

Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are  
one:

Accomplish thou my manhood and thy-  
self;

Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust  
to me.'

## CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you  
all

The random scheme as wildly as it rose :  
The words are mostly mine ; for when  
we ceased

There came a minute's pause, and Walter  
said,

' I wish she had not yielded ! ' then to me,  
' What, if you drest it up poetically ! '

So pray'd the men, the women : I gave  
assent :

Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of  
seven

Together in one sheaf ? What style could  
suit ?

The men required that I should give  
throughout

The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
With which we banter'd little Lilia first :  
The women—and perhaps they felt their  
power,

For something in the ballads which they  
sang,

Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,  
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
close—

They hated banter, wish'd for something  
real,

A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime ?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close ?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce  
could be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
And I, betwixt them both, to please them  
both,

And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor  
them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no  
part

In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she  
pluck'd the grass,

She flung it from her, thinking : last, she  
fixt

A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
' You—tell us what we are ' who might  
have told,

For she was cramm'd with theories out  
of books,

But that there rose a shout : the gates  
were closed

At sunset, and the crowd were swarming  
now,

To take their leave, about the garden  
rails.

So I and some went out to these : we  
climb'd

The slopeto Vivian-place, and turning saw  
The happy valleys, half in light, and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of  
peace ;

Gray halls alone among their massive  
groves ;

Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic  
tower

Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of  
wheat ;

The shimmering glimpses of a stream ;  
the seas ;

A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of  
France.

' Look there, a garden ! ' said my  
college friend,

The Tory member's elder son, ' and  
there !

God bless the narrow sea which keeps  
her off,

And keeps our Britain, whole within  
herself,

A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
Some reverence for the laws ourselves  
have made,

Some patient force to change them when  
we will,

Some civic manhood firm against the  
crowd—

But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden  
beat,

The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
 The king is scared, the soldier will not  
   fight,  
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the  
   world  
 In mock heroics stranger than our own ;  
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring  
   out ;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they  
   are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in  
   them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a  
   dream  
 As some of theirs—God bless the narrow  
   seas !  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves  
   are full  
 Of social wrong ; and maybe wildest  
   dreams  
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth :  
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
 The sport half-science, fill me with a  
   faith,  
 This fine old world of ours is but a child  
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! Give it  
   time  
 To learn its limbs : there is a hand that  
   guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden  
   rails,  
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he  
   stood,  
 Before a tower of crimson holly-hoaks,  
 Among six boys, head under head, and  
   look'd  
 No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial English-  
   man,  
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
 A patron of some thirty charities,  
 A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;

Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy  
   morn ;  
 Now shaking hands with him, now him,  
   of those  
 That stood the nearest—now address'd  
   to speech—  
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such as  
   closed  
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the  
   year  
 To follow : a shout rose again, and made  
 The long line of the approaching rookery  
   swerve  
 From the elms, and shook the branches  
   of the deer  
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
   and rang  
 Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout  
 More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
 Premier or king ! Why should not these  
   great Sirs  
 Give up their parks some dozen times a  
   year  
 To let the people breathe ? So thrice  
   they cried,  
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
   away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and  
   sat on,  
 So much the gathering darkness charm'd :  
   we sat  
 But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
 Perchance upon the future man : the  
   walls  
 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and  
   owls whoop'd,  
 And gradually the powers of the night,  
 That range above the region of the wind,  
 Deepening the courts of twilight broke  
   them up  
 Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
 Beyond all thought into the Heaven of  
   Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir  
   Ralph  
 From those rich silks, and home well  
   pleased we went.

# ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

PUBLISHED IN 1852

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,

Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a  
mighty nation,

Mourning when their leaders fall,

Warriors carry the warrior's pall,

And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

## II

Where shall we lay the man whom we  
deplore?

Here, in streaming London's central roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for,

And the feet of those he fought for,

Echo round his bones for evermore.

## III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,

As fits an universal woe,

Let the long long procession go,

And let the sorrowing crowd about it  
grow,

And let the mournful martial music blow ;

The last great Englishman is low.

## IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,

Remembering all his greatness in the  
Past.

No more in soldier fashion will he greet

With lifted hand the gazer in the street.

O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :

Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,

The statesman-warrior, moderate, reso-  
lute,

Whole in himself, a common good.

Mourn for the man of amplest influence,

Yet clearest of ambitious crime,

Our greatest yet with least pretence,

Great in council and great in war,

Foremost captain of his time,

Rich in saving common-sense,

And, as the greatest only are,

In his simplicity sublime.

O good gray head which all men knew,

O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,

O iron nerve to true occasion true,

O fall'n at length that tower of strength

Which stood four-square to all the winds  
that blew !

Such was he whom we deplore.

The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.

The great World-victor's victor will be  
seen no more.

## V

All is over and done :

Render thanks to the Giver,

England, for thy son.

Let the bell be toll'd.

Render thanks to the Giver,

And render him to the mould.

Under the cross of gold

That shines over city and river,

There he shall rest for ever

Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a reverent people behold

The towering car, the sable steeds :

Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a deeper knell in the heart be  
knoll'd ;

And the sound of the sorrowing anthem  
roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;

And the volleying cannon thunder his  
loss ;

He knew their voices of old.

For many a time in many a clime

His captain's-ear has heard them boom

Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :

When he with those deep voices wrought,

Guarding realms and kings from shame ;

With those deep voices our dead captain  
taught

The tyrant, and asserts his claim

In that dread sound to the great name,

Which he has worn so pure of blame,

In praise and in dispraise the same,

A man of well-attemper'd frame,  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

## VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd  
guest,  
With banner and with music, with soldier  
and with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking on  
my rest?  
Mighty Seaman, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.  
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous  
man,

The greatest sailor since our world began.  
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes;  
For this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea;  
His foes were thine; he kept us free;  
O give him welcome, this is he  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee;  
For this is England's greatest son,  
He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
Nor ever lost an English gun;  
This is he that far away  
Against the myriads of Assaye  
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;  
And underneath another sun,  
Warring on a later day,  
Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth anew,  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms,  
Back to France with countless blows,  
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.

Such a war had such a close.  
Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing  
wings,  
And barking for the thrones of kings;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler  
down;

A day of onsets of despair!  
Dash'd on every rocky square  
Their surging charges foam'd themselves  
away;

Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and  
overthrew.

So great a soldier taught us there,  
What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!  
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all,  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by  
thine!

And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
forget,  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless  
Powers;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly  
set  
His Briton in blown seas and storming  
showers,

We have a voice, with which to pay the  
 debt  
 Of boundless love and reverence and re-  
 gret  
 To those great men who fought, and kept  
 it ours.  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
 control ;  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,  
 the soul  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England  
 whole,  
 And save the one true seed of freedom  
 sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which there  
 springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;  
 For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march of  
 mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and crowns  
 be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts ;  
 He bad you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
 wall ;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent ; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who  
 spoke ;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the  
 hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high and  
 low ;  
 Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;  
 Who never spoke against a foe ;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one  
 rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the  
 right :  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
 named ;

Truth-lover was our English Duke ;  
 Whatever record leap to light  
 He never shall be shamed.

## VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open hands  
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the state.  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-  
 story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory :  
 He that walks it, only thirsting  
 For the right, and learns to deaden  
 Love of self, before his journey closes,  
 He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
 Into glossy purples, which outredden  
 All voluptuous garden-roses.  
 Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory :  
 He, that ever following her commands,  
 On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light has  
 won  
 His path upward, and prevail'd,  
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
 scaled  
 Are close upon the shining table-lands  
 To which our God Himself is moon and  
 sun.  
 Such was he : his work is done.  
 But while the races of mankind endure,  
 Let his great example stand  
 Colossal, seen of every land,  
 And keep the soldier firm, the statesman  
 pure :  
 Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
 The path of duty be the way to glory :  
 And let the land whose hearths he saved  
 from shame  
 For many and many an age proclaim  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 And when the long-illuminated cities  
 flame,  
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,



With honour, honour, honour, honour to  
him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see :  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung :  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and  
brain

Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere ;  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,  
And brawling memories all too free  
For such a wise humility  
As befits a solemn fane :  
We revere, and while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be,  
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will ;  
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
roll  
Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul ?  
On God and Godlike men we build our  
trust.  
Hush, the Dead March wails in the  
people's ears :  
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs  
and tears :  
The black earth yawns : the mortal  
disappears ;  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;

He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
Of the force he made his own  
Being here, and we believe him  
Something far advanced in State,  
And that he wears a truer crown  
Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
Speak no more of his renown,  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him.  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852.

## THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY

1852

My Lords, we heard you speak : you told  
us all  
That England's honest censure went  
too far ;  
That our free press should cease to brawl,  
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into  
war.  
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,  
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing, into  
words.

We love not this French God, the child  
of Hell,  
Wild War, who breaks the converse of  
the wise ;  
But though we love kind Peace so well,  
We dare not ev'n by silence sanction  
lies.  
It might be safe our censures to withdraw ;  
And yet, my Lords, not well : there is a  
higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak free,  
Tho' all the storm of Europe on us  
break ;  
No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe : we *must*  
speak ;  
That if to-night our greatness were struck  
dead,  
There might be left some record of the  
things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be bold.

Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant o'er.  
Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and ours for evermore.  
What ! have we fought for Freedom from  
our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a public  
crime ?

Shall we fear *him* ? our own we never  
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we  
wrung our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burthen of the second  
James.

I say, we *never* feared ! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove  
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the people  
muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons' breed—  
Were those your sires who fought at  
Lewes ?

Is this the manly strain of Runnymede ?  
O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of this  
monstrous fraud !

*We* feel, at least, that silence here were sin,  
Not ours the fault if we have feeble  
hosts—

If easy patrons of their kin  
Have left the last free race with naked  
coasts !

They knew the precious things they had  
to guard :

For us, we will not spare the tyrant one  
hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester may  
bawl,

What England was, shall her true sons  
forget ?

We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her honour  
yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall stand,  
And hold against the world this honour  
of the land.

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

I

HALF a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.  
'Forward, the Light Brigade !  
Charge for the guns !' he said :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade !'  
Was there a man dismay'd ?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd :  
Their's not to make reply,  
Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
All the world wonder'd :  
Plunged in the battery-smoke  
Right thro' the line they broke ;  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
Shatter'd and sunder'd .  
Then they rode back, but not  
Not the six hundred.

## V

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon behind them  
   Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 While horse and hero fell,  
 They that had fought so well  
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
 Back from the mouth of Hell,  
 All that was left of them,  
   Left of six hundred.

## VI

When can their glory fade ?  
 O the wild charge they made !  
   All the world wonder'd.  
 Honour the charge they made !  
 Honour the Light Brigade,  
   Noble six hundred !

# ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

## I

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,  
   In this wide hall with earth's invention  
   stored,  
 And praise the invisible universal Lord,  
 Who lets once more in peace the nations  
   meet,  
   Where Science, Art, and Labour have  
   outpour'd  
 Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

## II

O silent father of our Kings to be.  
 Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
 For this, for all, we weep our thanks to  
   thee !

## III

The world-compelling plan was thine,—  
 And, lo ! the long laborious miles  
 Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,  
 Rich in model and design ;  
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
 Loom and wheel and engineering,

Secrets of the sullen mine,  
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
 Sunny tokens of the Line,  
 Polar marvels, and a feast  
 Of wonder, out of West and East,  
 And shapes and hues of Art divine !  
 All of beauty, all of use,  
 That one fair planet can produce,  
   Brought from under every star,  
 Blown from over every main,  
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
   The works of peace with works of war.

## IV

Is the goal so far away ?  
 Far, how far no tongue can say,  
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

## V

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who  
   reign,  
 From growing commerce loose her latest  
   chain,  
 And let the fair white-wing'd peacemaker  
   fly  
 To happy havens under all the sky,  
 And mix the seasons and the golden  
   hours ;  
 Till each man find his own in all men's  
   good,  
 And all men work in noble brotherhood,  
 Breaking their mailed fleets and armed  
   towers,  
 And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,  
 And gathering all the fruits of earth and  
   crown'd with all her flowers.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,  
   Alexandra !  
 Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
 But all of us Danes in our welcome of  
   thee,                                   Alexandra !  
 Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet !  
 Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
   street !

Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet !

Break, happy land, into earlier flowers !

Make music, O bird, in the new-budded bowers !

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer !

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours !

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !

Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers !

Flames, on the windy headland flare !

Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !

Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air !

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !

Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire !

Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,

Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your own :

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,

Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee, Alexandra !

# A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH

MARCH 7, 1874

## I

THE Son of him with whom we strove for power—

Whose will is lord thro' all his world-domain—

Who made the serf a man, and burst his chain—

Has given our Prince his own imperial Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a people's pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin to blow !

From love to love, from home to home you go,

From mother unto mother, stately bride, Marie Alexandrovna !

## II

The golden news along the steppes is blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents are stirr'd ;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have heard ;

And all the sultry palms of India known, Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea

On capes of Afric as on cliffs of Kent,

The Maoris and that Isle of Continent, And loyal pines of Canada murmur thee,

Marie Alexandrovna

## III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty life !—

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman swords ;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne a wife,

Alexandrovna !

For thrones and peoples are as waifs that swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and flow ;

But who love best have best the grace to know

That Love by right divine is deathless king,

Marie Alexandrovna !

## IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger  
land,  
Where men are bold and strongly say  
their say ;—  
See, empire upon empire smiles to-  
day,  
As thou with thy young lover hand in  
hand

Alexandrovna !

So now thy fuller life is in the west,  
Whose hand at home was gracious to  
thy poor :  
Thy name was blest within the narrow  
door ;  
Here also, Marie, shall thy name be blest,  
Marie Alexandrovna !

## V

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame again?  
Or at thy coming, Princess, every-  
where,  
The blue heaven break, and some  
diviner air  
Breathe thro' the world and change the  
hearts of men,  
Alexandrovna ?  
But hearts that change not, love that  
cannot cease,  
And peace be yours, the peace of soul  
in soul !  
And howsoever this wild world may roll,  
Between your peoples truth and manful  
peace,  
Alfred—Alexandrovna !

## THE GRANDMOTHER

## I

And Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?  
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.  
And Willy's wife has written : she never was over-wise,  
Never the wife for Willy : he wouldn't take my advice.

## II

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,  
Hadh't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was against it for one.  
Eh !—but he wouldn't hear me—and Willy, you say, is gone.

## III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock ;  
Never a man could fling him : for Willy stood like a rock.  
'Here's a leg for a babe of a week !' says doctor ; and he would be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

## IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue !  
I ought to have gone before him : I wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie : I have not long to stay ;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

## V

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold ;  
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old :  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie : it cost me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time : I knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar !  
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

## VIII

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

## IX

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day ;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been !  
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

## X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrupt the nightingale.

## XI

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by the gate of the farm,  
Willy,—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how ;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

## XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant ;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtsey and went.  
And I said, ' Let us part : in a hundred years it'll all be the same,  
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name.'

## XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine :  
' Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.  
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill ;  
But marry me out of hand : we two shall be happy still.'



## XIV

'Marry you, Willy !' said I, 'but I needs must speak my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind.'  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, 'No, love, no';  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## XV

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a lilac gown ;  
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

## XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife ;  
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

## XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :  
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain,  
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :  
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

## XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :  
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way :  
Never jealous—not he : we had many a happy year ;  
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :  
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.  
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :  
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

## XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :  
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,  
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

## XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their team :  
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.  
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—  
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

## XXII

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;  
 For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :  
 And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;  
 I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

## XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;  
 I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :  
 And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;  
 I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

## XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :  
 But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;  
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease ;  
 And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

## XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,  
 And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.  
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest ;  
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower ;  
 But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour,—  
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next ;  
 I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed ?

## XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.  
 Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.  
 There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.  
 But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER

## OLD STYLE

## I

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän ?  
 Noorse ? thourt nowt o' a noorse : whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :  
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle : but I beänt a fool :  
 Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to break my rule.

## II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true :  
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.  
 I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.  
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

## III

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.  
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you<sup>1</sup> to 'issén, my friend,' a said,  
 An' a tow'd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

## IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.  
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.  
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voätet wi' Squire an' choorch an' staäte,  
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

## V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's chooch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,  
 An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock<sup>2</sup> ower my 'eäd,  
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,  
 An' I thowt a said whot a ewt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

## VI

Bessy Marris's barne ! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
 Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understand ;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

## VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä  
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.  
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste :  
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

## VIII

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass ? naw, naw, tha was not born then ;  
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen ;  
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,<sup>3</sup> fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,  
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

## IX

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce  
 Down i' the woild 'enemies<sup>4</sup> afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.  
 Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner<sup>5</sup> 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.  
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour.<sup>2</sup> Cockchafer.<sup>3</sup> Bittern.<sup>4</sup> Anemones.<sup>5</sup> One or other.

## X

Dubbut looök at the waäste : theer warn't not feeäd for a cow ;  
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—  
 Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,  
 Fourscoor<sup>1</sup> yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd.<sup>2</sup>

## XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,  
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,  
 Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

## XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä ?  
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä ;  
 An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear !  
 And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

## XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,  
 Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence :  
 But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now  
 Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow !

## XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,  
 Says to thessén naw doubt 'what a man a beä sewer-loi !'  
 Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All ;  
 I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

## XV

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
 For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit ;  
 Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,  
 Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

## XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm  
 Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.  
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,  
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

## XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle ?  
 Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle ;  
 I weänt break rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy ;  
 Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

<sup>1</sup> ou as in hour.<sup>2</sup> Clover.

# NORTHERN FARMER

## NEW STYLE

### I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy ?  
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.  
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaïns :  
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braaïns.

### II

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse—  
Doshn't thou know that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse ?  
Time to think on it then ; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.<sup>1</sup>  
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

### III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee ;  
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.  
Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—  
Noä—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

### IV

Seeä'd her todaäy goä by—Saäint's-daäy—they was ringing the bells.  
She's a beauty thou thinks—an' soä is scoors o' gells,  
Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty ?—the flower as blaws.  
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

### V

Do'ant be stunt :<sup>2</sup> taäke time : I knows what maäkes tha sa mad  
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad ?  
But I know'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this :  
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is !'

### VI

An' I went wheer munny war : an' thy muther coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laaid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.  
Maäybe she warn't a beauty :—I niver giv it a thowt—  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

### VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle<sup>3</sup> her breäd :  
Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissen clear,  
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shere.

<sup>1</sup> This week.

<sup>2</sup> Obstinate.

<sup>3</sup> Earn.

## VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,  
 Stook to his taa'il they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.  
 An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shuvv,  
 Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>1</sup> yowe : fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX

Luvv ? what's luvv ? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,  
 Maäkin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.  
 Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laa'id by ?  
 Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it : reäson why.

## X

Ay an' thy müther says thou wants to marry the lass,  
 Cooms of a gentleman burn : an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.  
 Woä then, proputtu, wiltha ?—an ass as near as mays nowt<sup>2</sup>—  
 Woä then, wiltha ? dangtha !—the bees is as fell as owt.<sup>3</sup>

## XI

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence !  
 Gentleman burn ! what's gentleman burn ? is it shillins an' pence ?  
 Proputtu, proputtu's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest  
 If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

## XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,  
 Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.  
 Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.  
 Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

## XIII

Them or thir feythurs, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,  
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.  
 Feyther 'ad ammost nowt ; leästways 'is munny was 'id.  
 But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill !  
 Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill ;  
 An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see ;  
 And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

## XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick ;  
 But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick.—  
 Coom oop, proputtu, proputtu—that's what I 'ears 'im saäy—  
 Proputtu, proputtu, proputtu—canter an' canter awaäy.

<sup>1</sup> Or fow-welter'd,—said of a sheep lying on its back.

<sup>2</sup> Makes nothing.

<sup>3</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.



## THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine ;  
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;  
Where, here and there, on sandy  
beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
Now watching high on mountain cor-  
nice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;  
But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green ;  
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;  
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours ;  
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the  
glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on The Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.  
O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :  
Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nurseling of another sky  
Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and  
Earth,  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,  
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

### TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
Godfather, come and see your boy :  
Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Shouldeighty-thousand college-councils  
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you wel-  
come

(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin ;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;  
But when the wreath of March has  
blossom'd,  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

## WILL

## I

O WELL for him whose will is strong !  
 He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;  
 He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :  
 For him nor moves the loud world's  
     random mock,  
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
 Who seems a promontory of rock,  
 That, compass'd round with turbulent  
     sound,  
 In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
 Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## II

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
 Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended  
     Will,  
 And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
 Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
 Recurring and suggesting still !  
 He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
 Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
 And o'er a weary sultry land,  
 Far beneath a blazing vault,  
 Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
 The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF  
CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest  
     white,  
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening  
     of the night,  
 All along the valley, where thy waters flow,  
 I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty  
     years ago.  
 All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,  
 The two and thirty years were a mist that  
     rolls away ;  
 For all along the valley, down thy rocky  
     bed,  
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice  
     of the dead,  
 And all along the valley, by rock and  
     cave and tree,  
 The voice of the dead was a living voice  
     to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT  
SWAINSTON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,  
     Within was weeping for thee :  
 Shadows of three dead men  
     Walk'd in the walks with me,  
 Shadows of three dead men and thou  
     wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods :  
     The Master was far away :  
 Nightingales warbled and sang  
     Of a passion that lasts but a day ;  
     Still in the house in his coffin the Prince  
     of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known  
     In courtesy like to thee :  
 Two dead men have I loved  
     With a love that ever will be :  
 Three dead men have I loved and thou  
     art last of the three.

## THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour  
     I cast to earth a seed.  
 Up there came a flower,  
     The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
     Thro' my garden-bower,  
 And muttering discontent  
     Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
     It wore a crown of light,  
 But thieves from o'er the wall  
     Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide  
     By every town and tower,  
 Till all the people cried,  
     'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable :  
     He that runs may read.  
 Most can raise the flowers now,  
     For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
And some are poor indeed ;  
And now again the people  
Call it but a weed.

### REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly  
glides.

It sees itself from thatch to base  
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die !  
Her quiet dream of life this hour may  
cease.

Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
To some more perfect peace.

### THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,  
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,  
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud  
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,  
'O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,  
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

'The sands and yeasty surges mix  
In caves about the dreary bay,  
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure  
To those that stay and those that roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, "Stay for shame";  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all to  
blame.

'God help me ! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.'

### THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or so ?'  
The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she was  
wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go ?'  
And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, 'And shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,  
But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I  
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd ;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the  
Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no !  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
throat,

And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not ! mock me not ! love, let  
us go.'

'No, love, no.  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom on  
the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
sea,  
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens the  
blood ;  
And makes it a sorrow to be.'

## CHILD-SONGS

## I

## THE CITY CHILD

DAINTY little maiden, whither would you wander ?

Whither from this pretty home, the home where mother dwells ?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas, anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury-bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander ?

Whither from this pretty house, this city-house of ours ?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty little maiden,

'All among the meadows, the clover and the clematis,

Daisies and kingcups and honeysuckle-flowers.'

## II

## MINNIE AND WINNIE

MINNIE and Winnie

Slept in a shell.

Sleep, little ladies !

And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,

Silver without ;

Sounds of the great sea

Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies !

Wake not soon !

Echo on echo

Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars

Peep'd into the shell.

'What are they dreaming of ?

Who can tell ?'

Started a green linnet

Out of the croft ;

Wake, little ladies,

The sun is aloft !

## THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,

And with it a spiteful letter.

My name in song has done him much wrong,

For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,

If men neglect your pages ?

I think not much of yours or of mine,

I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of the times !

Are mine for the moment stronger ?

Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,

I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief ;

What room is left for a hater ?

Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener leaf,

For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I—is that your cry ?

And men will live to see it.

Well—if it be so—so it is, you know ;

And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,

But this is the time of hollies.

O hollies and ivies and evergreens,

How I hate the spites and the follies !

## LITERARY SQUABBLES

AH God ! the petty fools of rhyme

That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars

Before the stony face of Time,

And look'd at by the silent stars :

Who hate each other for a song,

And do their little best to bite

And pinch their brethren in the throng,

And scratch the very dead for spite :

And strain to make an inch of room

For their sweet selves, and cannot hear

The sullen Lethe rolling doom

On them and theirs and all things here :

When one small touch of Charity  
 Could lift them nearer God-like state  
 Than if the crowded Orb should cry  
 Like those who cried Diana great :

And I too, talk, and lose the touch  
 I talk of. Surely, after all,  
 The noblest answer unto such  
 Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

## THE VICTIM

### I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
 A famine after laid them low,  
 Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,  
 For on them brake the sudden foe ;  
 So thick they died the people cried,  
 ' The Gods are moved against the land.'  
 The Priest in horror about his altar  
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand :  
 ' Help us from famine  
 And plague and strife !  
 What would you have of us ?  
 Human life ?  
 Were it our nearest,  
 Were it our dearest,  
 (Answer, O answer)  
 We give you his life.'

### II

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
 And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood ;  
 And dead men lay all over the way,  
 Or down in a furrow scathed with flame :  
 And ever and aye the Priesthood moan'd,  
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
 came.  
 ' The King is happy  
 In child and wife ;  
 Take you his dearest,  
 Give us a life.'

### III

The Priest went out by heath and hill ;  
 The King was hunting in the wild ;  
 They found the mother sitting still ;  
 She cast her arms about the child.

The child was only eight summers old,  
 His beauty still with his years increased,  
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,  
 He seem'd a victim due to the priest.  
 The Priest beheld him,  
 And cried with joy,  
 ' The Gods have answer'd :  
 We give them the boy.'

### IV

The King return'd from out the wild,  
 He bore but little game in hand ;  
 The mother said, ' They have taken the  
 child  
 To spill his blood and heal the land :  
 The land is sick, the people diseased,  
 And blight and famine on all the lea :  
 The holy Gods, they must be appeased,  
 So I pray you tell the truth to me.  
 They have taken our son,  
 They will have his life.  
 Is *he* your dearest ?  
 Or I, the wife ?'

### V

The King bent low, with hand on brow,  
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee :  
 ' O wife, what use to answer now ?  
 For now the Priest has judged for me.'  
 The King was shaken with holy fear ;  
 ' The Gods,' he said, ' would have  
 chosen well ;  
 Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
 And which the dearest I cannot tell !'  
 But the Priest was happy,  
 His victim won :  
 ' We have his dearest,  
 His only son !'

### VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
 The knife uprising toward the blow  
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone,  
 ' Me, not my darling, no !'  
 He caught her away with a sudden cry ;  
 Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
 And shrieking ' I am his dearest, I—  
 I am his dearest !' rush'd on the  
 knife.



And the Priest was happy,  
'O, Father Odin,  
We give you a life.

Which was his nearest?  
Who was his dearest?  
The Gods have answer'd;  
We give them the wife!

## WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,  
Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea—  
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong—  
Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she :  
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death : if the wages of Virtue be dust,  
Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?  
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,  
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky :  
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—  
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?  
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason why ;  
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee ; and thou fulfillest thy doom  
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise ; O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some : no God at all, says the fool ;  
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see ;  
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

## THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

## I

THE voice and the Peak  
 Far over summit and lawn,  
 The lone glow and long roar  
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
 of dawn !

## II

All night have I heard the voice  
 Rave over the rocky bar,  
 But thou wert silent in heaven,  
 Above thee glided the star.

## III

Haßt thou no voice, O Peak,  
 That standest high above all ?  
 'I am the voice of the Peak,  
 I roar and rave for I fall.

## IV

'A thousand voices go  
 To North, South, East, and West ;  
 They leave the heights and are troubled,  
 And moan and sink to their rest.

## V

'The fields are fair beside them,  
 The chestnut towers in his bloom ;  
 But they—they feel the desire of the deep—  
 Fall, and follow their doom.

## VI

'The deep has power on the height,  
 And the height has power on the deep ;  
 They are raised for ever and ever,  
 And sink again into sleep.'

## VII

Not raised for ever and ever,  
 But when their cycle is o'er,  
 The valley, the voice, the peak, the star  
 Pass, and are found no more.

## VIII

The Peak is high and flush'd  
 At his highest with sunrise fire ;  
 The Peak is high, and the stars are high,  
 And the thought of a man is higher.

## IX

A deep below the deep,  
 And a height beyond the height !  
 Our hearing is not hearing,  
 And our seeing is not sight.

## X

The voice and the Peak  
 Far into heaven withdrawn,  
 The lone glow and long roar  
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
 of dawn !

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
 I pluck you out of the crannies,  
 I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
 Little flower—but *if* I could understand  
 What you are, root and all, and all in  
 all,  
 I should know what God and man is.

## A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true—no truer Time  
 himself  
 Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-  
 more  
 Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
 Shoots to the fall—take this and pray  
 that he  
 Who wrote it, honouring your sweet faith  
 in him,  
 May trust himself ; and after praise and  
 scorn,  
 As one who feels the immeasurable  
 world,  
 Attain the wise indifference of the wise ;  
 And after Autumn past—if left to pass  
 His autumn into seeming-leafless days—  
 Draw toward the long frost and longest  
 night,  
 Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
 fruit  
 Which in our winter woodland looks a  
 flower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus  
 Europæus*).

## EXPERIMENTS

## BOÄDICEA

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian legionaries  
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,  
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,  
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

“ They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,  
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating?  
 Shall I heed them in their anguish? shall I brook to be supplicated?  
 Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?  
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?  
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,  
 Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,  
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,  
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.  
 Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!  
 There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.  
 There the hive of Roman liars worship an emperor-idiot.  
 Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!

“ Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian!  
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiuchlanian, Trinobant.  
 These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,  
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,  
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,  
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.  
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;  
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary;  
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering—  
 There was one who watch'd and told me—down their statue of Victory fell.  
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson? shall we care to be pitiful?  
 Shall we deal with it as an infant? shall we dandle it amorously?

“ Hear Icenian, Catiuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,  
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,  
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,  
 “ Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets!  
 Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,  
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet!  
 Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,

Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,  
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,  
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God,"  
 So they chanted : how shall Britain light upon auguries happier ?  
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

'Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !  
 Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,  
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators !  
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy !  
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.  
 Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne !  
 There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,  
 Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringletd Britoness—  
 Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.  
 Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,  
 Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously  
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.  
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelíne !  
 There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,  
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.  
 There they dwelt and there they rioted ; there—there—they dwell no more.  
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,  
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,  
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,  
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,  
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.'

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.  
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,  
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,  
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,  
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,  
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.  
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries  
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,  
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,  
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,  
 Then her pulses at the clamouring of her enemy fainted away.  
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.  
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.  
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,  
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cámulodúne.

## IN QUANTITY

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

*Hexameters and Pentameters*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer !  
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.  
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England?  
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon?  
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

## MILTON

*Alcaics*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,  
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for ages ;  
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,  
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—  
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Hendecasyllabics*

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,  
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,  
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me  
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—  
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—  
 As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

## SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

So Hector spake ; the Trojans roar'd  
 applause ;  
 Then loosed their sweating horses from  
 the yoke,  
 And each beside his chariot bound his  
 own ;  
 And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted  
 wine  
 And bread from out the houses brought,  
 and heap'd  
 Their firewood, and the winds from off  
 the plain  
 Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.  
 And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup> of  
 war  
 Sat glorying ; many a fire before them  
 blazed :

<sup>1</sup> Or, ridge.

As when in heaven the stars about the  
moon  
Look beautiful, when all the winds are  
laid,  
And every height comes out, and jutting  
peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
Break open to their highest, and all the  
stars  
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his  
heart :

So many a fire between the ships and  
stream  
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of  
Troy,  
A thousand on the plain ; and close by  
each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;  
And eating hoary grain and pulse the  
steeds,  
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden  
dawn. *Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

## THE WINDOW ;

### OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days ; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

*December, 1870.*

A. TENNYSON.

## THE WINDOW

### ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly !  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye !  
Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her  
window pane,

When the winds are up in the  
morning ?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows that  
cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home  
of my love,

You are all running on, and I stand on  
the slope of the hill,

And the winds are up in the morning !

Follow, follow the chase !  
And my thoughts are as quick and as  
quick, ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her sweet  
little face ?

And my heart is there before you are  
come, and gone,

When the winds are up in the  
morning !

Follow them down the slope !

And I follow them down to the window  
pane of my dear,

And it brightens and darkens and  
brightens like my hope,

And it darkens and brightens and darkens  
like my fear,

And the winds are up in the  
morning.

### AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine !

Rose, rose and clematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,

Kiss, kiss ; and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower.



Vine, vine and eglantine,  
 Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?  
 Rose, rose and clematis,  
 Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
 Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower  
     All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
     Dropt, a flower.

## GONE

Gone!  
 Gone, till the end of the year,  
 Gone, and the light gone with her, and  
     left me in shadow here!  
     Gone—flitted away,  
 Taken the stars from the night and the  
     sun from the day!  
 Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
     storm in the air!  
 Flown to the east or the west, flitted I  
     know not where!  
 Down in the south is a flash and a groan:  
     she is there! she is there!

## WINTER

The frost is here,  
 And fuel is dear,  
 And woods are sear,  
 And fires burn clear,  
 And frost is here  
 And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite!  
 You roll up away from the light  
 The blue wood-louse, and the plump  
     dormouse,  
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies are  
     kill'd,  
 And you bite far into the heart of the  
     house,  
 But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!  
 The woods are all the searer,  
 The fuel is all the dearer,  
 The fires are all the clearer,  
 My spring is all the nearer,  
 You have bitten into the heart of the  
     earth,  
 But not into mine.

## SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song  
 Flying here and there,  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 And you with gold for hair!  
 Birds' song and birds' love,  
 Passing with the weather,  
 Men's song and men's love,  
 To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,  
 And women's love and men's!  
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,  
 You my queen of the wrens!  
 You the queen of the wrens—  
 We'll be birds of a feather,  
 I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,  
 And all in a nest together.

## THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?  
 Fine little hands, fine little feet—  
     Dewy blue eye.  
 Shall I write to her? shall I go?  
 Ask her to marry me by and by?  
 Somebody said that she'd say no;  
     Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?  
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy?  
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
     Fly;  
 Fly to the light in the valley below—  
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:  
 Somebody said that she'd say no;  
     Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

## NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and the  
     rain!  
 Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
 And never a glimpse of her window pane!  
 And I may die but the grass will grow,  
 And the grass will grow when I am gone,  
 And the wet west wind and the world  
     will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,

Ay is life for a hundred years,  
 No will push me down to the worm,  
 And when I am there and dead and gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world will  
 go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the  
 wet !

Wet west wind how you blow, you  
 blow !

And never a line from my lady yet !

Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?

Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
 The wet west wind and the world may  
 go on.

#### NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
 Take my love, for love will come,

Love will come but once a life.

Winds are loud and winds will pass !

Spring is here with leaf and grass :

Take my love and be my wife.

After-loves of maids and men

Are but dainties drest again :

Love me now, you'll love me then :

Love can love but once a life.

#### THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,

Claspt on her seal, my sweet !

Must I take you and break you,

Two little hands that meet ?

I must take you, and break you,

And loving hands must part—

Take, take—break, break—

Break—you may break my heart.

Faint heart never won—

Break, break, and all's done.

#### AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,

Be merry on earth as you never were  
 merry before,

Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,

And merry for ever and ever, and one  
 day more.

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,

The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
 from out of the pine !

Look how they tumble the blossom, the  
 mad little tits !

'Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !' was ever a May  
 so fine ?

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

O merry the linnet and dove,

And swallow and sparrow and throstle,  
 and have your desire !

O merry my heart, you have gotten the  
 wings of love,

And flit like the king of the wrens with  
 a crown of fire.

Why ?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

#### WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes,

Time slips away.

Sun sets, moon sets,

Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'

'We shall both be gray.'

'A month hence, a month hence.'

'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'

'Ah, the long delay.'

'Wait a little, wait a little,

You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,

And that's an age away.'

Blaze upon her window, sun,

And honour all the day.

#### MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,

You send a flash to the sun.

Here is the golden close of love,

All my wooing is done.

Oh, the woods and the meadows,

Woods where we hid from the wet,

Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,

Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale  
 You flash and lighten afar,  
 For this is the golden morning of love,  
 And you are his morning star.  
 Flash, I am coming, I come,  
 By meadow and stile and wood,  
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,  
 Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires ?  
 O heart, are you great enough for love ?  
 I have heard of thorns and briers.  
 Over the thorns and briers,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Flash for a million miles.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
 Whom we, that have not seen thy  
 face,  
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
 Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
 Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
 Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
 Thou madest man, he knows not  
 why,  
 He thinks he was not made to die ;  
 And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
 Our wills are ours, we know not  
 how ;  
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
 They have their day and cease to be :  
 They are but broken lights of thee,  
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
 For knowledge is of things we see ;  
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
 A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
 But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
 That mind and soul, according well,  
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
 We mock thee when we do not fear :  
 But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
 What seem'd my worth since I  
 began ;  
 For merit lives from man to man,  
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
 I trust he lives in thee, and there  
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
 Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
 To one clear harp in divers tones,  
 That men may rise on stepping-stones  
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
 And find in loss a gain to match ?  
 Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
 The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss :  
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
 To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
 The long result of love, and boast,  
 'Behold the man that loved and lost,  
 But all he was is overworn.'

## II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
 That name the under-lying dead,  
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
 And bring the firstling to the flock ;  
 And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
 Who changest not in any gale,  
 Nor branding summer suns avail  
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
 I seem to fail from out my blood  
 And grow incorporate into thee.

## III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run ;  
 A web is wov'n across the sky ;  
 From out waste places comes a cry,  
 And murmurs from the dying sun :

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
 With all the music in her tone,  
 A hollow echo of my own,—  
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
 Embrace her as my natural good ;  
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

## IV

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
 My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
 I sit within a helmless bark,  
 And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
 That thou should'st fail from thy  
 desire,  
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
 Some pleasure from thine early years.  
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling  
 tears,  
 That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
 All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
 With morning wakes the will, and  
 cries,  
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

## V

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
 To put in words the grief I feel ;  
 For words, like Nature, half reveal  
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
 A use in measured language lies ;  
 The sad mechanic exercise,  
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
 Like coarsest clothes against the  
 cold :  
 But that large grief which these  
 enfold  
 Is given in outline and no more.

## VI

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'  
 That 'Loss is common to the race'—  
 And common is the commonplace,  
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
 My own less bitter, rather more :  
 Too common ! Never morning wore  
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is  
 bow'd,  
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
 At that last hour to please him well ;  
 Who mused on all I had to tell,  
 And something written, something  
 thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
 And ever met him on his way  
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'  
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
 That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
 And glad to find thyself so fair,  
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
 In expectation of a guest ;  
 And thinking 'this will please him  
 best,'  
 She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
 And with the thought her colour  
 burns ;  
 And, having left the glass, she turns  
 Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
 Had fallen, and her future Lord  
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the  
 ford,  
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
 And what to me remains of good ?  
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
 And unto me no second friend.

## VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
 Here in the long unlovely street,  
 Doors, where my heart was used to  
 beat  
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
 And like a guilty thing I creep  
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
 The noise of life begins again,  
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII

A happy lover who has come  
 To look on her that loves him well,  
 Who 'lights and rings the gateway  
 bell,  
 And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
 And all the place is dark, and all  
 The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
 In which we two were wont to meet,  
 The field, the chamber and the street,  
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
 In those deserted walks, may find  
 A flower beat with rain and wind,  
 Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
 O my forsaken heart, with thee.  
 And this poor flower of poesy  
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
 I go to plant it on his tomb,  
 That if it can it there may bloom,  
 Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
 In vain ; a favourable speed  
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
 As our pure love, thro' early light  
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the  
 prow ;

Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
 My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
 Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
 Dear as the mother to the son,  
 More than my brothers are to me.

## X

I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
 I hear the bell struck in the night :  
 I see the cabin-window bright ;  
 I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
 And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
 And letters unto trembling hands ;  
 And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
 This look of quiet flatters thus  
 Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
 The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
 And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
 And only thro' the faded leaf  
 The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
 And on these dews that drench the  
 furze,  
 And all the silvery gossamers  
 That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
 That sweeps with all its autumn  
 bowers,  
 And crowded farms and lessening  
 towers,  
 To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
 These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
 And in my heart, if calm at all,  
 If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
 And waves that sway themselves in  
 rest,  
 And dead calm in that noble breast  
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
 Some dolorous message knit below  
 The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
 I leave this mortal ark behind,  
 A weight of nerves without a mind,  
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
 And reach the glow of southern skies,  
 And see the sails at distance rise,  
 And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; ' Comes he thus, my friend ?  
 Is this the end of all my care ?'  
 And circle moaning in the air :  
 ' Is this the end ? Is this the end ?'

And forward dart again, and play  
 About the prow, and back return  
 To where the body sits, and learn  
 That I have been an hour away.

## XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
 And moves his doubtful arms, and  
 feels  
 Her place is empty, fall like these ;



Which weep a loss for ever new,  
 A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
 And, where warm hands have prest  
 and closed,  
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
 An awful thought, a life removed,  
 The human-hearted man I loved,  
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
 I do not suffer in a dream ;  
 For now so strange do these things  
 seem,  
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
 And glance about the approaching  
 sails,  
 As tho' they brought but merchants'  
 bales,  
 And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV

If one should bring me this report,  
 That thou hadst touch'd the land  
 to-day,  
 And I went down unto the quay,  
 And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
 Should see thy passengers in rank  
 Come stepping lightly down the  
 plank,  
 And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
 The man I held as half-divine ;  
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
 And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
 And how my life had droop'd of late,  
 And he should sorrow o'er my state  
 And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
 No hint of death in all his frame,  
 But found him all in all the same,  
 I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV

To-night the winds begin to rise  
 And roar from yonder dropping day :  
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
 The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
 The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
 The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver  
 That all thy motions gently pass  
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
 And but for fear it is not so,  
 The wild unrest that lives in woe  
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
 And onward drags a labouring breast,  
 And topples round the dreary west,  
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI

What words are these have fall'n from me?  
 Can calm despair and wild unrest  
 Be tenants of a single breast,  
 Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take  
 The touch of change in calm or storm ;  
 But knows no more of transient form  
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?  
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
 And staggers blindly ere she sink ?  
 And stunn'd me from my power to  
 think  
 And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man  
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
 And flashes into false and true,  
 And mingles all without a plan ?

## XVII

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze  
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
 Was as the whisper of an air  
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
 Week after week: the days go by:  
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
 My blessing, like a line of light,  
 Is on the waters day and night,  
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
 Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;  
 And balmy drops in summer dark  
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
 Such precious relics brought by thee;  
 The dust of him I shall not see  
 Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand  
 Where he in English earth is laid,  
 And from his ashes may be made  
 The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth  
 As if the quiet bones were blest  
 Among familiar names to rest  
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
 And come, whatever loves to weep,  
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
 I, falling on his faithful heart,  
 Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
 The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
 The words that are not heard again.

## XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave  
 The darken'd heart that beat no  
 more;

They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;  
 The salt sea-water passes by,  
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
 When fill'd with tears that cannot  
 fall,

I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
 Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
 My deeper anguish also falls,  
 And I can speak a little then.

## XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
 That breathe a thousand tender  
 vows,

Are but as servants in a house  
 Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
 And weep the fulness from the  
 mind:

'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find  
 Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,  
 That out of words a comfort win;  
 But there are other griefs within,  
 And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
 Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
 And scarce endure to draw the  
 breath,  
 Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,  
 So much the vital spirits sink  
 To see the vacant chair, and think,  
 'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

## XXI

I sing to him that rests below,  
 And, since the grasses round me wave,  
 I take the grasses of the grave,  
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
 And sometimes harshly will he speak :  
 ' This fellow would make weakness  
 weak,  
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, ' Let him be,  
 He loves to make parade of pain,  
 That with his piping he may gain  
 The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth : ' Is this an hour  
 For private sorrow's barren song,  
 When more and more the people  
 throng  
 The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

' A time to sicken and to swoon,  
 When Science reaches forth her arms  
 To feel from world to world, and  
 charms  
 Her secret from the latest moon ?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
 Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
 I do but sing because I must,  
 And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,  
 For now her little ones have ranged ;  
 And one is sad ; her note is changed,  
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII

The path by which we twain did go,  
 Which led by tracts that pleased us  
 well,  
 Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
 And, crown'd with all the season  
 lent,  
 From April on to April went,  
 And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
 As we descended following Hope,  
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
 And spread his mantle dark and  
 cold,  
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
 And think, that somewhere in the  
 waste  
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
 Or breaking into song by fits,  
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
 The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
 I wander, often falling lame,  
 And looking back to whence I came,  
 Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where it  
 ran  
 Thro' lands where not a leaf was  
 dumb ;  
 But all the lavish hills would hum  
 The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
 And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
 And Thought leapt out to wed with  
 Thought  
 Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
 And all was good that Time could  
 bring,  
 And all the secret of the Spring  
 Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive heights divinely sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV

And was the day of my delight  
 As pure and perfect as I say?  
 The very source and fount of Day  
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
 This earth had been the Paradise  
 It never look'd to human eyes  
 Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
 Makes former gladness loom so  
 great?  
 The lowness of the present state,  
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win  
 A glory from its being far;  
 And orb into the perfect star  
 We saw not, when we moved therein?

## XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track  
 Whereon with equal feet we fared;  
 And then, as now, the day prepared  
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
 As light as carrier-birds in air;  
 I loved the weight I had to bear,  
 Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
 When mighty Love would cleave in  
 twain  
 The lading of a single pain,  
 And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;  
 I with it; for I long to prove  
 No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
 And goodness, and hath power to  
 see  
 Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
 And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
 Or see (in Him is no before)  
 In more of life true life no more  
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
 That Shadow waiting with the  
 keys,  
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII

I envy not in any moods  
 The captive void of noble rage,  
 The linnet born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes  
 His license in the field of time,  
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
 The heart that never plighted troth  
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;  
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost  
 Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:  
 The moon is hid; the night is still;  
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
 From far and near, on mead and  
 moor,  
 Swell out and fail, as if a door  
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
 That now dilate, and now decrease,  
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and  
 peace,  
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
 And that my hold on life would break  
 Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
 For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with  
 joy,  
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve  
 As daily vexes household peace,  
 And chains regret to his decease,  
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
 To enrich the threshold of the night  
 With shower'd largess of delight  
 In dance and song and game and jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
 Make one wreath more for Use and  
 Wont,  
 That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
 Why should they miss their yearly  
 due  
 Before their time ? They too will die.

## XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave  
 The holly round the Christmas  
 hearth ;  
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
 We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
 Of gladness, with an awful sense  
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
 We heard them sweep the winter  
 land ;  
 And in a circle hand-in-hand  
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
 A merry song we sang with him  
 Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
 Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
 ' They rest,' we said, ' their sleep is  
 sweet,'  
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
 Once more we sang : ' They do not  
 die  
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
 Nor change to us, although they change ;

' Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
 With gather'd power, yet the same,  
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
 Draw forth the cheerful day from  
 night :  
 O Father, touch the east, and light  
 The light that shone when Hope was  
 born.

## XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
 And home to Mary's house return'd,  
 Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
 To hear her weeping by his grave ?

' Where wert thou, brother, those four  
 days ?'  
 There lives no record of reply,  
 Which telling what it is to die  
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
 The streets were fill'd with joyful  
 sound,  
 A solemn gladness even crown'd  
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
 He told it not ; or something seal'd  
 The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
 Nor other thought her mind admits  
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
 All other, when her ardent gaze  
 Roves from the living brother's face,  
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
 Borne down by gladness so complete,  
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's  
 feet  
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
 prayers,  
 Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
 What souls possess themselves so  
 pure,  
 Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

## XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm  
 Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer  
 air,

Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
 Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
 Her hands are quicker unto good :  
 Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
 To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
 In holding by the law within,  
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
 And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,  
 That life shall live for evermore,  
 Else earth is darkness at the core,  
 And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
 Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
 In some wild Poet, when he works  
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?  
 'Twere hardly worth my while to  
 choose  
 Of things all mortal, or to use  
 A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
 Like birds the charming serpent  
 draws,  
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
 Should murmur from the narrow  
 house,  
 'The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
 Man dies : nor is there hope in dust :'

Might I not say ? 'Yet even here,  
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
 To keep so sweet a thing alive :'  
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
 The sound of streams that swift or  
 slow  
 Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
 The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
 'The sound of that forgetful shore  
 Will change my sweetness more and  
 more,  
 Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put  
 An idle case ? If Death were seen  
 At first as Death, Love had not been,  
 Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
 Had bruised the herb and crush'd  
 the grape,  
 And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.



## XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
 We yield all blessing to the name  
 Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
 Where truth in closest words shall  
 fail,  
 When truth embodied in a tale  
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and  
 wrought  
 With human hands the creed of  
 creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
 More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
 And those wild eyes that watch the  
 wave

In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow :  
 'Thou pratest here where thou art  
 least ;

This faith has many a purer priest,  
 And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,  
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
 About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,  
 A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
 'I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
 Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,  
 And owning but a little art  
 To lull with song an aching heart,  
 And render human love his dues ;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,  
 And all he said of things divine,  
 (And dear to me as sacred wine  
 To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,  
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd ;  
 And loiter'd in the master's field,  
 And darken'd sanctities with song.'

## XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,  
 Tho' always under alter'd skies  
 The purple from the distance dies,  
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
 The herald melodies of spring,  
 But in the songs I love to sing  
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
 Survive in spirits render'd free,  
 Then are these songs I sing of thee  
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,  
 And answering now my random  
 stroke

With fruitful cloud and living smoke,  
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,  
 To thee too comes the golden hour  
 When flower is feeling after flower ;  
 But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—  
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?  
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
 And passes into gloom again.

## XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
 And look on Spirits breathed away,  
 As on a maiden in the day  
 When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth  
 rise  
 To take her latest leave of home,  
 And hopes and light regrets that  
 come

Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
 And tears are on the mother's face,  
 As parting with a long embrace  
 She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
 Becoming as is meet and fit  
 A link among the days, to knit  
 The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
 A life that bears immortal fruit  
 In those great offices that suit  
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
 How often shall her old fireside  
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
 And bring her babe, and make her  
 boast,  
 Till even those that miss'd her most  
 Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
 Till growing winters lay me low ;  
 My paths are in the fields I know,  
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
 Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
 And I have lost the links that bound  
 Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be—  
 That I could wing my will with  
 might  
 To leap the grades of life and light,  
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
 To that vague fear implied in death ;  
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
 The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
 An inner trouble I behold,  
 A spectral doubt which makes me  
 cold,  
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
 The wonders that have come to  
 thee,  
 Thro' all the secular to-be,  
 But evermore a life behind.

## XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim :  
 He still outstript me in the race ;  
 It was but unity of place  
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
 And he the much-beloved again,  
 A lord of large experience, train  
 To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
 When one that loves but knows not,  
 reaps  
 A truth from one that loves and knows ?

## XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
 And every spirit's folded bloom  
 Thro' all its interval gloom  
 In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
 Bare of the body, might it last,  
 And silent traces of the past  
 Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
 So that still garden of the souls  
 In many a figured leaf enrolls  
 The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole  
 As when he loved me here in  
 Time,  
 And at the spiritual prime  
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead ?  
 For here the man is more and more ;  
 But he forgets the days before  
 God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
 Gives out at times (he knows not  
 whence)

A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
 (If Death so taste Lethean springs),  
 May some dim touch of earthly  
 things

Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;  
 My guardian angel will speak out  
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,  
 What time his tender palm is prest  
 Against the circle of the breast,  
 Has never thought that 'this is I' :

But as he grows he gathers much,  
 And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'  
 And finds 'I am not what I see,  
 And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may  
 begin,  
 As thro' the frame that binds him in  
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
 Which else were fruitless of their due,  
 Had man to learn himself anew  
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,  
 The path we came by, thorn and  
 flower,  
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last  
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
 But clear from marge to marge shall  
 bloom

The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;  
 The fruitful hours of still increase ;  
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
 A bounded field, nor stretching far ;  
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
 Should move his rounds, and fusing  
 all

The skirts of self again, should fall  
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
 Eternal form shall still divide  
 The eternal soul from all beside ;  
 And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
 Enjoying each the other's good :  
 What vaster dream can hit the mood  
 Of Love on earth ? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
 'Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light.'

## XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here pro-  
 posed,  
 Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;  
 She takes, when harsher moods  
 remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may  
 flit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with  
words,

But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Shortswallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that  
make

The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## L

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the  
nerves prick  
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer  
trust ;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and  
sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## LI

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden  
shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of  
faith ?

There must be wisdom with great  
Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
'Thou canst not move me from thy  
side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears ?  
What record ? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

'So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from  
pearl.'

## LIII

How many a father have I seen,  
 A sober man, among his boys,  
 Whose youth was full of foolish  
   noise,  
 Who wears his manhood hale and green :  
 And dare we to this fancy give,  
   That had the wild oat not been  
   sown,  
   The soil, left barren, scarce had  
   grown  
 The grain by which a man may live ?  
 Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
   For life outliving heats of youth,  
   Yet who would preach it as a truth  
 To those that eddy round and round ?  
 Hold thou the good : define it well :  
   For fear divine Philosophy  
   Should push beyond her mark, and  
   be  
 Procureess to the Lords of Hell.

## LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
   Will be the final goal of ill,  
   To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;  
 That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
   That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
   Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
 When God hath made the pile complete ;  
 That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
   That not a moth with vain desire  
   Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
 Or but subserves another's gain.  
 Behold, we know not anything ;  
   I can but trust that good shall fall  
   At last—far off—at last, to all,  
 And every winter change to spring.  
 So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
   An infant crying in the night :  
   An infant crying for the light :  
 And with no language but a cry.

## LV

The wish, that of the living whole  
   No life may fail beyond the grave,  
   Derives it not from what we have  
 The likest God within the soul ?  
 Are God and Nature then at strife,  
   That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
   So careful of the type she seems,  
 So careless of the single life ;  
 That I, considering everywhere  
   Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
   And finding that of fifty seeds  
 She often brings but one to bear,  
 I falter where I firmly trod,  
   And falling with my weight of cares  
   Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,  
 I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
   And gather dust and chaff, and call  
   To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no.  
   From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone  
   She cries, 'A thousand types are gone :  
 I care for nothing, all shall go.  
 'Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
   I bring to life, I bring to death :  
   The spirit does but mean the breath :  
 I know no more.' And he, shall he,  
 Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
   Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
   Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,  
 Who trusted God was love indeed  
   And love Creation's final law—  
   Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—  
 Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
   Who battled for the True, the Just,  
   Be blown about the desert dust,  
 Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
 A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
 That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail !  
 O for thy voice to soothe and bless !  
 What hope of answer, or redress ?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII

Peace ; come away : the song of woe  
 Is after all an earthly song :  
 Peace ; come away : we do him  
     wrong  
 To sing so wildly : let us go.

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are pale ;  
 But half my life I leave behind :  
 Methinks my friend is richly shrined ;  
 But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
 One set slow bell will seem to toll  
 The passing of the sweetest soul  
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
 Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
 And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,  
 'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

## LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell :  
 Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
 As drop by drop the water falls  
 In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
 Of hearts that beat from day to  
     day,  
 Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
 And those cold crypts where they shall  
     cease.

The high Muse answer'd : 'Wherefore  
     grieve  
 Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?  
 Abide a little longer here,  
 And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

## LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
 No casual mistress, but a wife,  
 My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
 As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
 And put thy harsher moods aside,  
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
 Nor will it lessen from to-day ;  
 But I'll have leave at times to play  
 As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
 With so much hope for years to come,  
 That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LX

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
 Like some poor girl whose heart is  
     set

On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
 She finds the baseness of her lot,  
 Half jealous of she knows not what,  
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
 She sighs amid her narrow days,  
 Moving about the household ways,  
 In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
 And tease her till the day draws by :  
 At night she weeps, 'How vain  
     am I !  
 How should he love a thing so low ?'

## LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,  
 Thy ransom'd reason changè replies  
 With all the circle of the wise,  
 The perfect flower of human time ;



And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
 How dimly character'd and slight,  
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and  
 night,  
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
 Where thy first form was made a man ;  
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
 The soul of Shakspeare love thee more,

## LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
 Could make thee somewhat blench  
 or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale,  
 And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
 When he was little more than boy,  
 On some unworthy heart with joy,  
 But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
 His other passion wholly dies,  
 Or in the light of deeper eyes  
 Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
 And love in which my hound has  
 part,  
 Can hang no weight upon my heart  
 In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
 And yet I spare them sympathy,  
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
 As, unto vaster motions bound,  
 The circuits of thine orbit round  
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
 As some divinely gifted man,  
 Whose life in low estate began  
 And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
 And breasts the blows of circum-  
 stance,

And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
 And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
 The pillar of a people's hope,  
 The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
 When all his active powers are still,  
 A distant dearth in the hill,  
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
 While yet beside its vocal springs  
 He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
 With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
 And reaps the labour of his hands,  
 Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
 ' Does my old friend remember me ? '

## LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ;  
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
 With ' Love's too precious to be lost,  
 A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
 Till out of painful phases wrought  
 There flutters up a happy thought,  
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
 And thine effect so lives in me,  
 A part of mine may live in thee  
 And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
 You wonder when my fancies play  
 To find me gay among the gay,  
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times  
my breath ;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with  
dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillé to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was  
lost :  
The streets were black with smoke  
and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary  
hairs :  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
I found an angel of the night ;  
The voice was low, the look was  
bright ;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :  
The voice was not the voice of grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXX

I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to paint  
The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning  
doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of  
wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something  
strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar  
white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane ?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun ;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the  
rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering,  
play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
crime,  
When the dark hand struck down  
thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning  
star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly  
wreath :

I curse not nature, no, nor death ;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out—to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
 I see thee what thou art, and know  
 Thy likeness to the wise below,  
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
 And what I see I leave unsaid,  
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has  
 made  
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
 In verse that brings myself relief,  
 And by the measure of my grief  
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
 In fitting aptest words to things,  
 Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
 And round thee with the breeze of  
 song  
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
 And, while we breathe beneath the  
 sun,  
 The world which credits what is done  
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
 But somewhere, out of human view,  
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
 And in a moment set thy face  
 Where all the starry heavens of  
 space  
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'  
 The secular abyss to come,  
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
 Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
 The darkness of our planet, last,  
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
 bowers  
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
 And what are they when these remain  
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
 To him, who turns a musing eye  
 On songs, and deeds, and lives, that  
 lie  
 Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
 May bind a book, may line a box,  
 May serve to curl a maiden's locks,  
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
 And, passing, turn the page that tells  
 A grief, then changed to something  
 else,  
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
 Shall ring with music all the same ;  
 To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave  
 The holly round the Christmas  
 hearth ;  
 The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
 No wing of wind the region swept,  
 But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
 Again our ancient games had place,  
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?  
 No single tear, no mark of pain :  
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ?  
 O last regret, regret can die !  
 No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
 Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXIX

' More than my brothers are to me,'—  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
 I know thee of what force thou art  
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
 As moulded like in Nature's mint ;  
 And hill and wood and field did print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same  
 All winds that roam the twilight came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
 But he was rich where I was poor,  
 And he supplied my want the more  
 As his likeness fitted mine.

## LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,  
 That holy Death ere Arthur died  
 Had moved me kindly from his side,  
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
 A grief as deep as life or thought,  
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
 I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
 He bears the burthen of the weeks  
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
 And, influence-rich to soothe and  
 save,  
 Unused example from the grave  
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,  
 ' My love shall now no further range ;  
 There cannot come a mellow  
 change,

For now is love mature in ear' !

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
 What end is here to my complaint ?  
 This haunting whisper makes me  
 faint,

' More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
 ' My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

## LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and  
 face ;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks ;  
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
 The use of virtue out of earth :  
 I know transplanted human worth  
 Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
 The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
 He put our lives so far apart  
 We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
 O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;  
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?  
 Can trouble live with April days,  
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
 The little speedwell's darling blue,  
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
 That longs to burst a frozen bud  
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone  
 The life that had been thine below,  
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
 To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
 A central warmth diffusing bliss  
 In glance and smile, and clasp and  
 kiss,

On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;  
 For now the day was drawing on,  
 When thou should'st link thy life  
 with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;  
 But that remorseless iron hour  
 Made cypress of her orange flower,  
 Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
 To clasp their cheeks, to call them mine.  
 I see their unborn faces shine  
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,  
 Thy partner in the flowery walk  
 Of letters, genial table-talk,  
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills  
 The lips of men with honest praise,  
 And sun by sun the happy days  
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;  
 And all the train of bounteous hours  
 Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
 Leaving great legacies of thought,  
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,  
 As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
 And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
 To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
 And He that died in Holy Land  
 Would reach us out the shining hand,  
 And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?  
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
 The old bitterness again, and break  
 The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,  
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
 Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
 Demanding, so to bring relief  
 To this which is our common grief,  
 What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above  
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;  
 And whether love for him have  
 drain'd  
 My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
 A faithful answer from the breast,  
 Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
 Till on mine ear this message falls,  
 That in Vienna's fatal walls  
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.



The great Intelligences fair  
 That range above our mortal state,  
 In circle round the blessed gate,  
 Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
 And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little  
 worth,  
 To wander on a darken'd earth,  
 Where all things round me breathed of  
 him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
 O sacred essence, other form,  
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
 How much of act at human hands  
 The sense of human will demands  
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
 His being working in mine own,  
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
 With gifts of grace, that might ex-  
 press  
 All-comprehensive tenderness,  
 All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
 To works of weakness, but I find  
 An image comforting the mind,  
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
 For other friends that once I met ;  
 Nor can it suit me to forget  
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
 To mourn for any overmuch ;  
 I, the divided half of such  
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
 Eternal, separate from fears :  
 The all-assuming months and years  
 Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
 And Spring that swells the narrow  
 brooks,  
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
 My old affection of the tomb,  
 And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak :  
 ' Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
 A friendship for the years to come.

' I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
 But in dear words of human speech  
 We two communicate no more.'

And I, ' Can clouds of nature stain  
 The starry clearness of the free ?  
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for me  
 Some painless sympathy with pain ?'

And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
 ' 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;  
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
 And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
 Or so methinks the dead would  
 say ;  
 Or so shall grief with symbols play  
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
 That these things pass, and I shall  
 prove  
 A meetingsomewhere, love with love,  
 I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
 I could not, if I would, transfer  
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
 The promise of the golden hours?  
 First love, first friendship, equal  
 powers,  
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
 That beats within a lonely place,  
 That yet remembers his embrace,  
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
 Quite in the love of what is gone,  
 But seeks to beat in time with one  
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
 The primrose of the later year,  
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
 That rollest from the gorgeous  
 gloom  
 Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
 And shadowing down the horned  
 flood  
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
 The full new life that feeds thy  
 breath  
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt  
 and Death,  
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas,  
 On leagues of odour streaming far,  
 To where in yonder orient star  
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

## LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls  
 In which of old I wore the gown;  
 I roved at random thro' the town,  
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes  
 The storm their high-built organs  
 make,  
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
 The measured pulse of racing oars  
 Among the willows; paced the shores  
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
 The same, but not the same; and  
 last  
 Up that long walk of limes I past  
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:  
 I linger'd; all within was noise  
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and  
 boys  
 That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band  
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
 And labour, and the changing mart,  
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
 But send it slackly from the string;  
 And one would pierce an outer ring,  
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
 Would cleave the mark. A willing  
 ear  
 We lent him. Who, but hung to  
 hear  
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and  
 grace  
 And music in the bounds of law,  
 To those conclusions when we saw  
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
 And over those ethereal eyes  
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
 Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
 O tell me where the senses mix,  
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
 And in the midmost heart of grief  
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
 I cannot all command the strings ;  
 The glory of the sum of things  
 Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and  
 bright ;  
 And thou, with all thy breadth and  
 height  
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
 And shook to all the liberal air  
 The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
 He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
 They pleased him, fresh from brawl-  
 ing courts  
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
 To drink the cooler air, and mark  
 The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
 The sweep of scythe in morning  
 dew,  
 The gust that round the garden flew,  
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
 About him, heart and ear were fed  
 To hear him, as he lay and read  
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
 Or here she brought the harp and  
 flung  
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
 And break the livelong summer day  
 With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to  
 theme,  
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
 He loved to rail against it still,  
 For 'ground in yonder social mill  
 We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and  
 gloss  
 The picturesque of man and man.'  
 We talk'd : the stream beneath us  
 ran,  
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
 And last, returning from afar,  
 Before the crimson-circled star  
 Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
 We heard behind the woodbine veil  
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
 And buzzings of the honied hours.

## XC

He tasted love with half his mind,  
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
 Where nighest heaven, who first  
 could fling  
 This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
 Were closed with wail, resume their  
 life,  
 They would but find in child and wife  
 An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
 To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
 To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
 To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
 Behold their brides in other hands ;  
 The hard heir strides about their  
 lands,  
 And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
 Not less the yet-loved sire would  
 make  
 Confusion worse than death, and  
 shake  
 The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
 Whatever change the years have  
 wrought,  
 I find not yet one lonely thought  
 That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
 And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
 Or underneath the barren bush  
 Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
 Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
 The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
 Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
 May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
 Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
 That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
 But where the sunbeam broodeth  
 warm,  
 Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
 And like a finer light in light

## XCII

If any vision should reveal  
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain.  
 As but the canker of the brain ;  
 Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
 Together in the days behind,  
 I might but say, I hear a wind  
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
 A fact within the coming year ;  
 And tho' the months, revolving near,  
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
 But spiritual presentiments,  
 And such refraction of events  
 As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
 No spirit ever brake the band  
 That stays him from the native land  
 Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
 Where all the nerve of sense is  
 numb ;  
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
 With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
 O, from the distance of the abyss  
 Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
 The wish too strong for words to  
 name ;  
 That in this blindness of the frame  
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
 With what divine affections bold  
 Should be the man whose thought  
 would hold  
 An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
 The spirits from their golden day,  
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.

## xcv

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
 For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
 And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
 Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
 The brook alone far-off was heard ;  
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine  
 capes

And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd  
 at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
 trees

Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
 Withdrew themselves from me and  
 night,

And in the house light after light  
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
 Of that glad year which once had  
 been,

In those fall'n leaves which kept  
 their green,

The noble letters of the dead :

T

And strangely on the silence broke  
 The silent-speaking words, and  
 strange

Was love's dumb cry defying change  
 To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
 On doubts that drive the coward back,  
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
 The dead man touch'd me from the  
 past,  
 And all at once it seem'd at last  
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd  
 About empyreal heights of thought,  
 And came on that which is, and  
 caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
 The steps of Time—the shocks of  
 Chance—

The blows of Death. At length  
 my trance

Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
 Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
 The knolls once more where, couch'd  
 at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the  
 trees

Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
 A breeze began to tremble o'er  
 The large leaves of the sycamore,  
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering fresher overhead,  
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and  
 swung

The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
 The lilies to and fro, and said

T

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away ;  
 And East and West, without a  
 breath,  
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and  
 death,  
 To broaden into boundless day.

## XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-  
 blue eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
 In many a subtle question versed,  
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true :

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
 At last he beat his music out.  
 There lives more faith in honest  
 doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd  
 strength,  
 He would not make his judgment  
 blind,  
 He faced the spectres of the mind  
 And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
 And Power was with him in the  
 night,  
 Which makes the darkness and the  
 light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
 While Israel made their gods of  
 gold,  
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
 He finds on misty mountain-ground  
 His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
 I look'd on these and thought of thee  
 In vastness and in mystery,  
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
 Their hearts of old have beat in  
 tune,  
 Their meetings made December June,  
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;  
 The days she never can forget  
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
 He reads the secret of the star,  
 He seems so near and yet so far,  
 He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
 A wither'd violet is her bliss :  
 She knows not what his greatness is,  
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
 Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
 She knows not matters of the house,  
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
 She darkly feels him great and wise,  
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
 'I cannot understand : I love.'

## XCVIII

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
 When I was there with him ; and go  
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
 That City. All her splendour seems  
 No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.



Let her great Danube rolling fair  
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
 I have not seen, I will not see  
 Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
 The birth, the bridal ; friend from  
 friend  
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
 By each cold hearth, and sadness  
 flings  
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
 With statelier progress to and fro  
 The double tides of chariots flow  
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
 He told me, lives in any crowd,  
 When all is gay with lamps, and  
 loud  
 With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
 And wheels the circled dance, and  
 breaks  
 The rocket molten into flakes  
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 So loud with voices of the birds,  
 So thick with lowings of the herds,  
 Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles  
 fast  
 By meadows breathing of the past,  
 And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
 A song that slights the coming care,  
 And Autumn laying here and there  
 A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
 To myriads on the genial earth,  
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,  
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
 To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
 They know me not, but mourn with me.

## C

I climb the hill : from end to end  
 Of all the landscape underneath,  
 I find no place that does not breathe  
 Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
 Or low morass and whispering  
 reed,  
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
 That hears the latest linnet trill,  
 Nor quarry trench'd along the hill  
 And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
 To left and right thro' meadowy  
 curves,  
 That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
 And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
 And, leaving these, to pass away,  
 I think once more he seems to die.

## CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
 The tender blossom flutter down,  
 Unloved, that beech will gather  
 brown,  
 This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
 Ray round with flames her disk of  
 seed,  
 And many a rose-carnation feed  
 With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
 The brook shall babble down the  
 plain,  
 At noon or when the lesser wain  
 Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
 And flood the haunts of hern and  
 crake ;  
 Or into silver arrows break  
 The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
 A fresh association blow,  
 And year by year the landscape  
 grow  
 Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills  
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
 And year by year our memory fades  
 From all the circle of the hills.

## CII

We leave the well-beloved place  
 Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
 The roofs, that heard our earliest  
 cry,  
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
 As down the garden-walks I move,  
 Two spirits of a diverse love  
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, ' Here thy boyhood sung  
 Long since its matin-song, and  
 heard  
 The low love-language of the bird  
 In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, ' Yea, but here  
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours  
 With thy lost friend among the  
 bowers,  
 And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,  
 And each prefers his separate claim,  
 Poor rivals in a losing game,  
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
 To leave the pleasant fields and  
 farms ;  
 They mix in one another's arms  
 To one pure image of regret.

## CIII

On that last night before we went  
 From out the doors where I was bred,  
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
 And maidens with me : distant hills  
 From hidden summits fed with rills  
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
 They sang of what is wise and good  
 And graceful. In the centre stood  
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
 The shape of him I loved, and love  
 For ever : then flew in a dove  
 And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
 They wept and wail'd, but led the  
 way  
 To where a little shallop lay  
 At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
 And shadowing bluff that made the  
 banks,  
 We glided winding under ranks  
 Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
 And roll'd the floods in grander  
 space,  
 The maidens gather'd strength and  
 grace  
 And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every  
 limb ;  
 I felt the thews of Anakim,  
 The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,  
 And one would chant the history  
 Of that great race, which is to be,  
 And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
 Began to foam, and we to draw  
 From deep to deep, to where we saw  
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
 But thrice as large as man he bent  
 To greet us. Up the side I went,  
 And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
 Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :  
 'We served thee here,' they said,  
 'so long,  
 And wilt thou leave us now behind ?'

So rapt I was, they could not win  
 An answer from my lips, but he  
 Replying, 'Enter likewise ye  
 And go with us' : they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
 A music out of sheet and shroud,  
 Westeer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
 That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;  
 The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
 A single church below the hill  
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
 That wakens at this hour of rest  
 A single murmur in the breast,  
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
 In lands where not a memory strays,  
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
 This laurel, let this holly stand :  
 We live within the stranger's land,  
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
 And silent under other snows :  
 There in due time the woodbine  
 blows,  
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
 The genial hour with mask and  
 mime ;  
 For change of place, like growth of  
 time,  
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
 By which our lives are chiefly  
 proved,  
 A little spare the night I loved,  
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
 For who would keep an ancient form  
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be  
 blown ;  
 No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and  
 lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
 The year is dying in the night ;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
 The year is going, let him go ;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no more ;  
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
 And ancient forms of party strife ;  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
 The faithless coldness of the times ;  
 Ring out, ring out my mournful  
 rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
 The civic slander and the spite ;  
 Ring in the love of truth and right,  
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII

It is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
 The blast of North and East, and ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
 Above the wood which grides and  
 clangs  
 Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
 To darken on the rolling brine  
 That breaks the coast. But fetch  
 the wine,  
 Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
 To make a solid core of heat ;  
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
 Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
 With books and music, surely we  
 Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
 And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,  
 And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
 I will not eat my heart alone,  
 Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
 And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
 To scale the heaven's highest height,  
 Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,  
 But mine own phantom chanting  
 hymns ?  
 And on the depths of death there  
 swims  
 The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
 Of sorrow under human skies :  
 'Tis held that sorrow makes us  
 wise,  
 Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
 From household fountains never  
 dry ;  
 The critic clearness of an eye,  
 That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force  
 To seize and throw the doubts of  
 man ;  
 Impassion'd logic, which outran  
 The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,  
 But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
 And passion pure in snowy bloom  
 Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
 Of freedom in her regal seat  
 Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,  
 The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace  
 In such a sort, the child would twine  
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
 And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
 Have look'd on : if they look'd in  
 vain,  
 My shame is greater who remain,  
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
 The men of rathe and riper years :  
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
 The proud was half disarm'd of  
 pride,  
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
 To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
 The flippant put himself to school  
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
 Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
 And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
 And loved them more, that they  
 were thine,  
 The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
 But mine the love that will not tire,  
 And, born of love, the vague desire  
 That spurs an imitative will.

## CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down  
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
 To him who grasps a golden ball,  
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
 His want in forms for fashion's  
 sake,  
 Will let his coltish nature break  
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,  
 To whom a thousand memories call,  
 Not being less but more than all  
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
 Each office of the social hour  
 To noble manners, as the flower  
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
 Drew in the expression of an eye,  
 Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse  
 The grand old name of gentleman,  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
 That I, who gaze with temperate  
 eyes  
 On glorious insufficiencies,  
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
 Of all my love, art reason why  
 I seem to cast a careless eye  
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel power  
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
 And hope could never hope too  
 much,  
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
 And tracts of calm from tempest  
 made,  
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with  
 thee  
 Which not alone had guided me,  
 But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
 In intellect, with force and skill  
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
 A soul on highest mission sent,  
 A potent voice of Parliament,  
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
 Becoming, when the time has birth,  
 A lever to uplift the earth  
 And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
 With agonies, with energies,  
 With overthrowings, and with cries,  
 And undulations to and fro.

## CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall  
 rail  
 Against her beauty? May she mix  
 With men and prosper! Who shall  
 fix  
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
 She sets her forward countenance  
 And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—  
 She cannot fight the fear of death.  
 What is she, cut from love and faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power. Let her know her place;  
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain; and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
 Who grewest not alone in power  
 And knowledge, but by year and  
 hour  
 In reverence and in charity.

## CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
 Now burgeons every maze of quick  
 About the flowering squares, and  
 thick  
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
 And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
 And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
 In yonder greenening gleam, and fly  
 The happy birds, that change their  
 sky

To build and brood ; that live their lives  
 From land to land ; and in my breast  
 Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
 Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
 And meets the year, and gives and  
 takes

The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
 The life re-orient out of dust,  
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine  
 Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
 And that dear voice, I once have  
 known,  
 Still speak to me of me and mine :



Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
 For days of happy commune dead ;  
 Less yearning for the friendship  
 fled,  
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this  
 To hold me from my proper place ;  
 A little while from his embrace,  
 For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
 And unto meeting when we meet,  
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
 And every span of shade that  
 steals,  
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
 And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
 The giant labouring in his youth ;  
 Nor dream of human love and truth,  
 As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead  
 Are breathers of an ampler day  
 For ever nobler ends. They say,  
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
 And grew to seeming-random forms,  
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
 Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to  
 clime,  
 The herald of a higher race,  
 And of himself in higher place,  
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
 Like glories, move his course, and  
 show  
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
 And heated hot with burning fears,  
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
 Move upward, working out the beast,  
 And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
 So quickly, not as one that weeps  
 I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
 I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
 Betwixt the black fronts long-with-  
 drawn  
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
 And bright the friendship of thine  
 eye ;  
 And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath :  
 I think we are not wholly brain,  
 Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
 Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
 Let Science prove we are, and then  
 What matters Science unto men,  
 At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
 His action like the greater ape,  
 But I was *born* to other things.

## CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
 And ready, thou, to die with him,  
 Thou watchest all things ever dim  
 And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
 The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
 Thou listenest to the closing door,  
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
 By thee the world's great work is  
 heard  
 Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
 Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
 And voices hail it from the brink ;  
 Thou hear'st the village hammer  
 clink,  
 And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
 For what is one, the first, the last,  
 Thou, like my present and my  
 past,  
 Thy place is changed ; thou art the  
 same.

## CXXII

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
 While I rose up against my doom,  
 And yearn'd to burst the folded  
 gloom,  
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,  
 To feel once more, in placid awe,  
 The strong imagination roll  
 A sphere of stars about my soul,  
 In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
 Divide us not, be with me now,  
 And enter in at breast and brow,  
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
 And like an inconsiderate boy,  
 As in the former flash of joy,  
 I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
 O earth, what changes hast thou  
 seen !

There where the long street roars,  
 hath been  
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
 From form to form, and nothing  
 stands ;  
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
 Like clouds they shape themselves and  
 go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
 And dream my dream, and hold it  
 true ;  
 For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless ;  
 Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest  
 doubt ;  
 He, They, One, All ; within, with-  
 out ;

The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
 Nor thro' the questions men may  
 try,  
 The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
 I heard a voice 'believe no more'  
 And heard an ever-breaking shore  
 That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
 The freezing reason's colder part,  
 And like a man in wrath the heart  
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
 But that blind clamour made me  
 wise ;  
 Then was I as a child that cries,  
 But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again  
 What is, and no man understands ;  
 And out of darkness came the hands  
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,  
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
 Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
 A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;  
 She did but look through dimmer  
 eyes ;  
 Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,  
 Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,  
 He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
 And if the words were sweet and  
 strong  
 He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail  
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
 And this electric force, that keeps  
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
 And in his presence I attend  
 To hear the tidings of my friend,  
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
 Within his court on earth, and sleep  
 Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
 Who moves about from place to place,  
 And whispers to the worlds of space,  
 In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
 Well roars the storm to those that  
 hear  
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
 The red fool-fury of the Seine  
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
 And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
 They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
 The fortress crashes from on high,  
 The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;  
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
 Is comrade of the lesser faith  
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
 Of onward time shall yet be made,  
 And throned races may degrade ;  
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
 If all your office had to do  
 With old results that look like new ;  
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
 To fool the crowd with glorious  
 lies,

To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours. I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

## CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal;  
 O loved the most, when most I feel  
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;  
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;  
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not  
 die,  
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
 Loved deeper, darker understood;  
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
 And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
 I hear thee where the waters run;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;  
 My love is vaster passion now;  
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature  
 thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure  
 When all that seems shall suffer  
 shock,  
 Rise in the spiritual rock,  
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
 A voice as unto him that hears,  
 A cry above the conquer'd years  
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
 The truths that never can be proved  
 Until we close with all we loved,  
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,  
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
 In that it is thy marriage day  
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
 Since first he told me that he loved  
 A daughter of our house; nor proved  
 Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
 Some thrice three years: they went  
 and came,  
 Remade the blood and changed the  
 frame,  
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
 In dying songs a dead regret,  
 But like a statue solid-set,  
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
 Than in the summers that are flown,  
 For I myself with these have grown  
 To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
 As echoes out of weaker times,  
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
 That must be made a wife ere noon?  
 She enters, glowing like the moon  
 Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
 And then on thee; they meet thy look  
 And brighten like the star that shook  
 Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
 He too foretold the perfect rose.  
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
 As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
 Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
 And I must give away the bride ;  
 She fears not, or with thee beside  
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,  
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
 That shielded all her life from harm  
 At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
 Their pensive tablets round her head,  
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
 The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again  
 The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of  
 twain

Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be  
 read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
 By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
 The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
 The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
 Await them. Many a merry face  
 Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
 With him to whom her hand I gave.  
 They leave the porch, they pass the  
 grave  
 That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
 For them the light of life increased,  
 Who stay to share the morning feast,  
 Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
 To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
 My drooping memory will not shun  
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
 And hearts are warm'd and faces  
 bloom,  
 As drinking health to bride and  
 groom

We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
 Perchance, perchance, among the  
 rest,  
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
 And those white-favour'd horses  
 wait ;  
 They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
 From little cloudlets on the-grass,  
 But sweeps away as out we pass  
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
 And talk of others that are wed,  
 And how she look'd, and what he  
 said,  
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
 The shade of passing thought, the  
 wealth  
 Of words and wit, the double health,  
 The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
 Dumb is that tower which spake so  
 loud,  
 And high in heaven the streaming  
 cloud,  
 And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
 Till over down and over dale  
 All night the shining vapour sail  
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
 And catch at every mountain head,  
 And o'er the friths that branch and  
 spread  
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;  
 And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
 With tender gloom the roof, the  
 wall ;  
 And breaking let the splendour fall  
 To spangle all the happy shores  
 By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
 And, star and system rolling past,  
 A soul shall draw from out the vast  
 And strike his being into bounds,  
 And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
 Result in man, be born and think,  
 And act and love, a closer link  
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
 On knowledge ; under whose com-  
 mand  
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their  
 hand  
 Is Nature like an open book ;  
 No longer half-akin to brute,  
 For all we thought and loved and did,  
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
 Of what in them is flower and fruit ;  
 Whereof the man, that with me trod  
 This planet, was a noble type  
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
 That friend of mine who lives in God,  
 That God, which ever lives and loves,  
 One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far-off divine event,  
 To which the whole creation moves.

## MAUD ; A MONODRAMA

### PART I

#### I

#### I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers ' Death.'

#### II

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
 His who had given me life—O father ! O God ! was it well ?—  
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented into the ground :  
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

#### III

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a vast speculation had fail'd,  
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,  
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

#### IV

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd  
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard  
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.



## V

Villainy somewhere ! whose ? One says, we are villains all.  
Not he : his honest fame should at least by me be maintained :  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

## VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace ? we have made them a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own ;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone ?

## VII

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word ?  
Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

## VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not ? I have neither hope nor trust ;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die : who knows ? we are ashes and dust.

## IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine.  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie ;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes !—but a company forges the wine.

## X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

## XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

## XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war ? better, war ! loud war by land and by sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

## XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

## XIV

What ! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood ?  
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie ?

## XV

Would there be sorrow for *me* ? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—  
Wrote in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

## XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.  
Why should I stay ? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here ?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear ?

## XVII

Workmen up at the Hall !—they are coming back from abroad ;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire :  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud ;  
I play'd with the girl when a child ; she promised then to be fair.

## XVIII

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,  
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,  
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

## XIX

What is she now ? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.  
No, there is fatter game on the moor ; she will let me alone.  
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.  
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

## II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may find it at last !  
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,  
Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is the fault ?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)  
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
 Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had not been  
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,  
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,  
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

## III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound ;  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV

## I

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

## II

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small !  
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite ;  
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar ;  
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;  
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light ;  
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star !

## III

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race ?  
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd :  
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor ;  
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.  
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud ;  
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

## IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal ;  
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like  
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :  
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;  
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,  
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

## V

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower ;  
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game  
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed ?  
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour ;  
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame ;  
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## VI

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.  
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man :  
 He now is first, but is he the last ? is he not too base ?

## VII

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor ;  
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.  
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain ;  
 For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more  
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

## VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.  
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about ?  
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.  
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail ?  
 Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout ?  
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

## IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,  
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,  
 Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies ;  
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise  
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,  
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.  
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.  
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above ;  
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will ;  
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree  
In the meadow under the Hall !  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call !  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

II

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny  
sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English  
green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her  
grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that  
cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid  
and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

III

Silence, beautiful voice !  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still ! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a  
choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are  
bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
I had fancied it would be fair.

II

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet ?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile  
so sweet,  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

III

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the live-long hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my  
dreams,  
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame ;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

## V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty.  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and  
ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

## VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and  
good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,

And the shrieking rush of the wainscot  
mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have  
grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of  
love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and  
trip  
When I saw the treasured splendour, her  
hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## X

I have play'd with her when a child;  
She remembers it now we meet.  
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII

## I

Did I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where?  
Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm-chair?

## II

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'



III

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night?

IV

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

VIII

She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone;  
And once, but once, she lifted her  
eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone;  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and  
sigh'd  
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX

I was walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,  
Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone:  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
Then returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

X

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendour  
plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a  
bride.  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,

Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well :

This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
This huckster put down war ! can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence ?  
Put down the passions that make earth  
Hell !

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear ;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.

## IV

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy !  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong,  
To take a wanton dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

## V

Ah-God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

## VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be !

## XI

## I

O let the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet ;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## II

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
Not close and darken above me  
Before I am quite quite sure  
That there is one to love me ;  
Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

## XII

## I

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

## II

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

## III

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing thro' the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here  
In among the lilies.

## IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately ;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

## V

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour !  
O Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

## VI

I know the way she went  
Home with her maiden posy,  
For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.

## VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
Were crying and calling to her,  
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?  
One is come to woo her.

## VIII

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII

## I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret?  
That a calamity hard to be borne?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vex't with his pride!  
I past him, I was crossing his lands;  
He stood on the path a little aside;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and  
white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

## II

Who shall call me ungente, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship;  
But while I past he was humming an air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonised me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## III

Why sits he here in his father's chair?  
That old man never comes to his place:  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?  
For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.

And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin:  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!  
Has not his sister smiled on me?

## XIV

## I

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## II

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as  
white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my  
Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,  
to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down  
to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

## III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

## IV

I heard no sound where I stood  
 But the rivulet on from the lawn  
 Running down to my own dark wood ;  
 Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it  
   swell'd  
 Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
 But I look'd, and round, all round the  
   house I beheld  
 The death-white curtain drawn ;  
 Felt a horror over me creep,  
 Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
 Knew that the death-white curtain meant  
   but sleep,  
 Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool  
   of the sleep of death.

## XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
 And I make myself such evil cheer,  
 That if I be dear to some one else,  
   Then some one else may have much to  
   fear ;  
 But if I be dear to some one else,  
   Then I should be to myself more dear.  
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else.

## XVI

## I

This lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
 And so that he find what he went to  
   seek,  
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and  
   drown  
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone for  
   a week :  
 But this is the day when I must speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O this is the day !  
 O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way ;  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,

And dream of her beauty with tender  
   dread,  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as the  
   crest

Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it.  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word ?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low ?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for me ?  
 I trust that it is not so.

## III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
 I must tell her, or die.

## XVII

Go not, happy day,  
   From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
   Till the maiden yields.  
 Rosy is the West,  
   Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
   And a rose her mouth  
 When the happy Yes  
   Falters from her lips,  
 Pass and blush the news  
   Over glowing ships ;  
 Over blowing seas,  
   Over seas at rest,  
 Pass the happy news,  
   Blush it thro' the West ;  
 Till the red man dance  
   By his red cedar-tree,  
 And the red man's babe  
   Leap, beyond the sea.

Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

I

I have led her home, my love, my only  
friend.

There is none like her, none.  
And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
And sweetly, on and on  
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
Full to the banks, close on the promised  
good.

None like her, none.  
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering  
talk  
Seem'd her light foot along the garden  
walk,  
And shook my heart to think she comes  
once more ;  
But even then, I heard her close the  
door,  
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she  
is gone.

III

There is none like her, none.  
Nor will be when our summers have  
deceased.  
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy  
delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here  
increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my  
fate,

And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must have  
spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy  
great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
whom she came.

IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches  
sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd  
hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to  
understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron  
skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and  
brand  
His nothingness into man.

V

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a  
pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow  
sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one  
simple girl.

VI

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death  
may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to  
live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal  
wrongs.

O, why should Love, like men in drink-  
ing-songs,

Spice his fair banquet with the dust of  
death ?

Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long loving  
kiss,

Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?  
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven  
here

With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself  
more dear.'

## VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver  
knell

Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal  
white,

And died to live, long as my pulses play ;  
But now by this my love has closed her  
sight

And given false death her hand, and stol'n  
away

To dreamful wastes where footless fancies  
dwell

Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace  
affright !

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy  
spell.

My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,  
farewell ;

It is but for a little space I go :  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the  
glow

Of your soft splendours that you look so  
bright ?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things  
below,

Beat with my heart more blest than heart  
can tell,

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent  
woe

That seems to draw—but it shall not be  
so :

Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

## I

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

## II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?

I have walk'd awake with Truth.

O when did a morning shine

So rich in atonement as this

For my dark-dawning youth,

Darken'd watching a mother decline

And that dead man at her heart and  
mine :

For who was left to watch her but I ?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## III

I trust that I did not talk

To gentle Maud in our walk

(For often in lonely wanderings

I have cursed him even to lifeless things)

But I trust that I did not talk,

Not touch on her father's sin :

I am sure I did but speak

Of my mother's faded cheek

When it slowly grew so thin,

That I felt she was slowly dying

Vext with lawyers and harass'd with  
debt :

For how often I caught her with eyes all  
wet,

Shaking her head at her son and sighing

A world of trouble within !

## IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved

To speak of the mother she loved

As one scarce less forlorn,

Dying abroad and it seems apart



From him who had ceased to share her  
heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn :  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet  
breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till  
death.

Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

V

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
sweet :

And none of us thought of a something  
beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart of the  
child,

As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;

And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run  
wild

While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

VI

But then what a flint is he !  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before ;  
And this was what had redden'd her  
cheek  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

VIII

Kind ? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind ? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind ; why let it be so :  
For shall not Maud have her will ?

IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay ;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours ;  
O then, what then shall I say ?—  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet !

X

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry ;  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX

I

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to-day

To beguile her melancholy ;  
 The Sultan, as we name him,—  
 She did not wish to blame him—  
 But he vexed her and perplexed her  
 With his worldly talk and folly :  
 Was it gentle to reprove her  
 For stealing out of view  
 From a little lazy lover  
 Who but claims her as his due ?  
 Or for chilling his caresses  
 By the coldness of her manners,  
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?  
 Now I know her but in two,  
 Nor can pronounce upon it  
 If one should ask me whether  
 The habit, hat, and feather,  
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
 Be the neater and completer ;  
 For nothing can be sweeter  
 Than maiden Maud in either.

## II

But to-morrow, if we live,  
 Our ponderous squire will give  
 A grand political dinner  
 To half the squirelings near ;  
 And Maud will wear her jewels,  
 And the bird of prey will hover,  
 And the titmouse hope to win her  
 With his chirrup at her ear,

## III

A grand political dinner  
 To the men of many acres,  
 A gathering of the Tory,  
 A dinner and then a dance  
 For the maids and marriage-makers,  
 And every eye but mine will glance  
 At Maud in all her glory.

## IV

For I am not invited,  
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
 I am all as well delighted,  
 For I know her own rose-garden,  
 And mean to linger in it  
 Till the dancing will be over ;  
 And then, oh then, come out to me  
 For a minute, but for a minute,

Come out to your own true lover,  
 That your true lover may see  
 Your glory also, and render  
 All homage to his own darling,  
 Queen Maud in all her splendour.

## XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
 And bringing me down from the Hall—  
 This garden-rose that I found,  
 Forgetful of Maud and me,  
 And lost in trouble and moving round  
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
 And trying to pass to the sea ;  
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
 My Maud has sent it by thee  
 (If I read her sweet will right)  
 On a blushing mission to me,  
 Saying in odour and colour, ' Ah, be  
 Among the roses to-night.'

## XXII

## I

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 For the black bat, night, has flown,  
 Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone ;  
 And the woodbine spices are wafted  
 abroad,  
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

## II

For a breeze of morning moves,  
 And the planet of Love is on high,  
 Beginning to faint in the light that she  
 loves  
 On a bed of daffodil sky,  
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
 To faint in his light, and to die.

## III

All night have the roses heard  
 The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
 All night has the casement jessamine  
 stirr'd  
 To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
 And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one  
 With whom she has heart to be gay.  
 When will the dancers leave her alone?  
 She is weary of dance and play.'  
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
 And half to the rising day;  
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
 The last wheel echoes away.

## V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes  
 In babble and revel and wine.  
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
 For one that will never be thine?  
 But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the  
 rose,  
 'For ever and ever, mine.'

## VI

And the soul of the rose went into my  
 blood,  
 As the music clash'd in the hall;  
 And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on to  
 the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

## VII

From the meadow your walks have left  
 so sweet  
 That whenever a March-wind sighs  
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
 In violets blue as your eyes,  
 To the woody hollows in which we meet  
 And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII

The slender acacia would not shake  
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;  
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake  
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;  
 But the rose was awake all night for your  
 sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me;  
 The lilies and roses were all awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with  
 curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate.  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate;  
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is  
 near';  
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is  
 late';  
 The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear';  
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

## XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead;  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.

## PART II

## I

'THE fault was mine, the fault was  
 mine'—  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the  
 hill?—  
 It is this guilty hand!—  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening land—  
 What is it, that has been done?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising  
 sun,  
 The fires of Hell and of Hate;

For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,  
He came with the babe-faced lord ;  
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie,  
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the face,

Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was gaping and grinning by :  
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe ;

For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,  
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christ-less code,

That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?  
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly !'  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood :  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till  
I die, till I die.

## II

Is it gone ? my pulses beat—  
What was it ? a lying trick of the brain ?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive :

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold  
Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of  
venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust ;  
We are not worthy to live.

## II

## I

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## II

What is it ? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world ?

## IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

## V

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—

Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

VI

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been past by!  
And now I remember, I,  
When he lay dying there,  
I noticed one of his many rings  
(For he had many, poor worm) and  
thought  
It is his mother's hair.

IX

Who knows if he be dead?  
Whether I need have fled?

Am I guilty of blood?  
However this may be,  
Comfort her, comfort her, all things  
good,  
While I am over the sea!  
Let me and my passionate love go by,  
But speak to her all things holy and  
high,  
Whatever happen to me!  
Me and my harmful love go by;  
But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
Powers of the height, Powers of the  
deep,  
And comfort her tho' I die.

III

Courage, poor heart of stone!  
I will not ask thee why  
Thou canst not understand  
That thou are left for ever alone:  
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply:  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

IV

I

O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!

II

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

III

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee:  
Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be.

## IV

It leads me forth at evening,  
 It lightly winds and steals  
 In a cold white robe before me,  
 When all my spirit reels  
 At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
 And the roaring of the wheels.

## V

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
 Half in dreams I sorrow after  
 The delight of early skies ;  
 In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
 For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
 For the meeting of the morrow,  
 The delight of happy laughter,  
 The delight of low replies.

## VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
 And a dewy splendour falls  
 On the little flower that clings  
 To the turrets and the walls ;  
 'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
 And the light and shadow fleet ;  
 She is walking in the meadow,  
 And the woodland echo rings ;  
 In a moment we shall meet ;  
 She is singing in the meadow  
 And the rivulet at her feet  
 Ripples on in light and shadow  
 To the ballad that she sings.

## VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
 My bird with the shining head,  
 My own dove with the tender eye ?  
 But there rings on a sudden a passionate  
     cry,  
 There is some one dying or dead,  
 And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
 For a tumult shakes the city,  
 And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
 Without knowledge, without pity,  
 By the curtains of my bed  
 That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
 Mix not memory with doubt,  
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
 Pass and cease to move about !  
 'Tis the blot upon the brain  
 That *will* show itself without.

## IX

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
 And the yellow vapours choke  
 The great city sounding wide ;  
 The day comes, a dull red ball  
 Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
 On the misty river-tide.

## X

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
 I steal, a wasted frame,  
 It crosses here, it crosses there,  
 Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
 The shadow still the same ;  
 And on my heavy eyelids  
 My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI

Alas for her that met me,  
 That heard me softly call,  
 Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
 At the quiet evenfall,  
 In the garden by the turrets  
 Of the old manorial hall.

## XII

Would the happy spirit descend,  
 From the realms of light and song,  
 In the chamber or the street,  
 As she looks among the blest,  
 Should I fear to greet my friend  
 Or to say ' Forgive the wrong,'  
 Or to ask her, ' Take me, sweet,  
 To the regions of thy rest ' ?

## XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,  
 And the shadow flits and fleets  
 And will not let me be ;  
 And I loathe the squares and streets,  
 And the faces that one meets,  
 Hearts with no love for me :



Always I long to creep  
 Into some still cavern deep,  
 There to weep, and weep, and weep  
 My whole soul out to thee.

## V

## I

Dead, long dead,  
 Long dead !  
 And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of passing  
     feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing and  
     clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it  
     is not so ;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that  
     not sad ?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go ;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

## II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man ;  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days  
     that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was  
     read ;  
 It is that which makes us loud in the  
     world of the dead ;  
 There is none that does his work, not  
     one ;  
 A touch of their office might have  
     sufficed,  
 But the churchmen fain would kill their  
     church,  
 As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## T

## III

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
 No limit to his distress ;  
 And another, a lord of all things, praying  
 To his own great self, as I guess ;  
 And another, a statesman there, betraying  
 His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
 The case of his patient—all for what ?  
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty  
     head,  
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
 For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
 For the prophecy given of old  
 And then not understood,  
 Has come to pass as foretold ;  
 Not let any man think for the public  
     good,  
 But babble, merely for babble.  
 For I never whisper'd a private affair  
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
 But I heard it shouted at once from the  
     top of the house ;  
 Everything came to be known.  
 Who told *him* we were there ?

## V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not  
     back  
 From the wilderness, full of wolves, where  
     he used to lie ;  
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-  
     grown whelp to crack ;  
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl,  
     and die.

## VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;  
 I know not whether he came in the  
     Hanover ship,  
 But I know that he lies and listens mute  
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
     holes :

## X

Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
 Except that now we poison our babes,  
     poor souls !  
 It is all used up for that.

## VII

Tell him now : she is standing here at my  
     head ;  
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
 He may take her now ; for she never  
     speaks her mind,  
 But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not *of* us, as I divine ;  
 She comes from another stiller world of  
     the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII

But I know where a garden grows,  
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow by night, when the season is  
     good,  
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but  
     blood ;  
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral  
     bride ;  
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
     brutes,  
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

## IX

But what will the old man say ?  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
     day ;  
 Yet now I could even weep to think  
     of it ;  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse in  
     the pit ?

## X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;  
 But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
 Are scarcely even akin.

## XI

O me, why have they not buried me deep  
     enough ?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
     rough ?  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?  
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;  
 I will cry to the steps above my head  
 And somebody, surely, some kind heart  
     will come  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## PART III

## VI

## I

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
 When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—  
'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

## II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright ;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## III

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'  
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## V

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind ;  
 It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill ;  
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

## IDYLLS OF THE KING

## IN TWELVE BOOKS

'*Flos Regum Arthurus.*'—JOSEPH OF EXETER.

## DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory—since he held  
 them dear,  
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,  
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—  
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
 Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,  
 'Who revered his conscience as his  
 king ;

Whose glory was, redressing human wrong ;  
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd  
 to it ;

Who loved one only and who clave to her—  
 Her—over all whose realms to their last  
 isle,

Commingled with the gloom of imminent  
 war,

The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,  
 Darkening the world. We have lost  
 him : he is gone :

We know him now : all narrow jealousies  
 Are silent ; and we see him as he moved,  
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
 wise,

With what sublime repression of himself,  
 And in what limits, and how tenderly ;  
 Not swaying to this faction or to that ;  
 Not making his high place the lawless  
 perch

Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground  
 For pleasure ; but thro' all this tract of  
 years

Wearing the white flower of a blameless  
 life,

Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
 In that fierce light which beats upon a  
 throne,

And blackens every blot : for where is he,  
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his !  
 Or how should England dreaming of *his*  
 sons

Hope more for these than some inheritance  
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
 Laborious for her people and her poor—  
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—  
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—  
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still  
 endure ;

Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
 Remembering all the beauty of that star  
 Which shone so close beside Thee that  
 ye made

One light together, but has past and leaves  
 The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,  
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,  
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,  
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again !

## THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
Had one fair daughter, and none other  
child ;

And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,  
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land ;  
And still from time to time the heathen  
host

Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was  
left.

And so there grew great tracts of wilder-  
ness,

Wherein the beast was ever more and  
more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur  
came.

For first Aurelius lived and fought and  
died,

And after him King Uther fought and died,  
But either fail'd to make the kingdom  
one.

And after these King Arthur for a space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table  
Round,

Drew all their petty principdoms under  
him,

Their king and head, and made a realm,  
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was  
waste,

Thick with wet woods, and many a beast  
therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the  
beast ;

So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and  
bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the  
fields,

And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.  
And ever and anon the wolf would steal  
The children and devour, but now and  
then,

Her own brood lost or dead, lent her  
fierce teat

To human sucklings ; and the children,  
housed

In her foul den, there at their meat would  
growl,

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-  
like men,

Worse than the wolves. And King  
Leodogran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,  
And Cæsar's eagle : then his brother king,  
Urien, assail'd him : last a heathen horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth  
with blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's  
heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
amazed,

He knew not whither he should turn for  
aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly  
crown'd,

Tho' not without an uproar made by those  
Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son'—the  
King

Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us  
thou !

For here between the man and beast we  
die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of  
arms,

But heard the call, and came : and  
Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him  
pass ;

But since he neither wore on helm or  
shield

The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his  
knights,

And many of these in richer arms than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she  
saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life

Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and  
pitch'd  
His tents beside the forest. Then he  
drape  
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and  
fell'd  
The forest, letting in the sun, and made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and the  
knight  
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts  
Of those great Lords and Barons of his  
realm  
Flash'd forth and into war: for most of  
these,  
Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,  
Made head against him, crying, 'Who  
is he  
That he should rule us? who hath proven  
him  
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,  
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor  
voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.  
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;  
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle,  
felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;  
And thinking as he rode, 'Her father said  
That there between the man and beast  
they die.  
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side with  
me?  
What happiness to reign a lonely king,  
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,  
O earth that soughdest hollow under me,  
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be  
join'd  
To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my  
work  
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own  
realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd with  
her,  
Then might we live together as one life,  
And reigning with one will in everything  
Have power on this dark land to lighten  
it,  
And power on this dead world to make  
it live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the  
tale—  
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle  
bright  
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the  
world  
Was all so clear about him, that he saw  
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,  
And even in high day the morning star.  
So when the King had set his banner  
broad,  
At once from either side, with trumpet-  
blast,  
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto  
blood,  
The long-lanced battle let their horses  
run.  
And now the Barons and the kings pre-  
vail'd,  
And now the King, as here and there  
that war  
Went swaying; but the Powers who walk  
the world  
Made lightnings and great thunders over  
him,  
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main  
might,  
And mightier of his hands with every  
blow,  
And leading all his knighthood threw the  
kings  
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
Claudias, and Clariance of Northumber-  
land,  
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice  
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees  
To one who sins, and deems himself alone  
And all the world asleep, they swerved  
and brake



Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the  
brands  
That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho ! they  
yield !'

So like a painted battle the war stood  
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.  
Helaugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved  
And honour'd most. 'Thou dost not  
doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for me  
to-day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of  
God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field :  
I know thee for my King !' Whereat the  
two,

For each had warded either in the fight,  
Swore on the field of death a deathless  
love.

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in  
man :

Let chance what will, I trust thee to the  
death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field  
he sent

Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new-made knights, to King Leodo-  
gran,

Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee  
well,

Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in  
heart

Debating—'How should I that am a  
king,

However much he help me at my need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a king,  
And a king's son ?'—lifted his voice, and  
call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom  
He trusted all things, and of him required  
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of  
Arthur's birth ?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and  
said,

'Sir King, there be but two old men that  
know :

And each is twice as old as I ; and one  
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served  
King Uther thro' his magic art ; and one  
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,  
Who taught him magic ; but the scholar  
ran

Before the master, and so far, that Bleys  
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and  
wrote

All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
In one great annal-book, where after years  
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied,  
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well  
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,  
Then beast and man had had their share  
of me :

But summon here before us yet once more  
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the  
King said,

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser  
fowl,

And reason in the chase : but wherefore  
now

Do these your lords stir up the heat of  
war,

Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
Others of Anton ? Tell me, ye your-  
selves,

Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son ?'

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'  
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights  
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
spake—

For bold in heart and act and word was  
he,

Whenever slander breathed against the  
King—

'Sir, there be many rumours on this  
head :

For there be those who hate him in their  
hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways are  
sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less than  
man :

And there be those who deem him more  
than man,  
And dream he dropt from heaven : but  
my belief

In all this matter—so ye care to learn—  
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's  
time

The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that  
held

Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne :  
And daughters had she borne him,—one  
whereof,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
cent,

Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
To Arthur,—but a son she had not borne.  
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love :  
But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
So loathed the bright dishonour of his  
love,

That Gorlois and King Uther went to war :  
And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.  
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged  
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,  
Seeing the mighty swarm about their  
walls,

Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,  
And there was none to call to but himself.  
So, compass'd by the power of the King,  
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,  
And with a shameful swiftness : after-  
ward,

Not many moons, King Uther died him-  
self,

Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule  
After him, lest the realm should go to  
wrack.

And that same night, the night of the new  
year,

By reason of the bitterness and grief  
That vexed his mother, all before his time  
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born  
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
Until his hour should come ; because the  
lords

Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,  
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn  
the child

Piecemeal among them, had they-known ;  
for each

But sought to rule for his own self and  
hand,

And many hated Uther for the sake  
Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took the  
child,

And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight  
And ancient friend of Uther ; and his wife  
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him  
with her own ;

And no man knew. And ever since the  
lords

Have foughten like wild beasts among  
themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack :  
but now,

This year, when Merlin (for his hour had  
come)

Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the  
hall,

Proclaiming, " Here is Uther's heir, your  
king,"

A hundred voices cried, " Away with him !  
No king of ours ! a son of Gorlois he,  
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,  
Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro' his  
craft,

And while the people clamour'd for a king,  
Had Arthur crown'd ; but after, the great  
lords

Banded, and so brake out in open war.'

Then while the King debated with  
himself

If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,  
Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,  
Or Uther's son, and born before his  
time,

Or whether there were truth in anything  
Said by these three, there came to Came-  
liard,

With Gawain and young Modred, her two  
sons,

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-  
cent ;

Whom as he could, not as he would, the  
King

Made feast for, saying, as they sat at  
meat

'A doubtful throne is ice on summer  
seas.

Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his  
men

Report him! Yea, but ye—think ye this  
king—

So many those that hate him, and so  
strong,

So few his knights, however brave they  
be—

Hath body enow to hold his foemen  
down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell  
thee: few,

Few, but all brave, all of one mind with  
him;

For I was near him when the savage yells  
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur sat  
Crown'd on the daïs, and his warriors  
cried,

"Be thou the king, and we will work thy  
will

Who love thee." Then the King in low  
deep tones,

And simple words of great authority,  
Bound them by so strait vows to his own  
self,

That when they rose, knighted from  
kneeling, some

Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one  
who wakes

Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake and cheer'd his  
Table Round

With large, divine, and comfortable words,  
Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld  
From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash  
A momentary likeness of the King:

And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross  
And those around it and the Crucified,  
Down from the casement over Arthur,  
smote

Flame-colour, vert and azure, in three  
rays,

One falling upon each of three fair queens,  
Who stood in silence near his throne, the  
friends

Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright  
Sweet faces, who will help him at his  
need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose  
vast wit

And hundred winters are but as the hands  
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

'And near him stood the Lady of the  
Lake,

Who knows a subtler magic than his  
own—

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
ful.

She gave the King his huge cross-hilted  
sword,

Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist  
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face  
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster  
gloom;

But there was heard among the holy  
hymns

A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever storms  
May shake the world, and when the  
surface rolls,

Hath power to walk the waters like our  
Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur

Before him at his crowning borne, the  
sword

That rose from out the bosom of the lake,  
And Arthur row'd across and took it—rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye—the blade so  
bright

That men are blinded by it—on one side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
world,

"Take me," but turn the blade and ye  
shall see,

And written in the speech ye speak your-  
self,

"Cast me away!" And sad was Arthur's  
face

Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,  
"Take thou and strike! the time to cast  
away

Is yet far-off." So this great brand the  
king  
Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
down.'

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but  
thought  
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,  
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,  
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,  
But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
Being his own dear sister'; and she said,  
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I';  
'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd  
the King.

She answer'd, 'These be secret things,'  
and sign'd

To those two sons to pass, and let them be.  
And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:  
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,  
And there half-heard; the same that  
afterward

Struck for the throne, and striking found  
his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,  
'What know I?

For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,  
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark  
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,  
Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is  
fair

Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,  
To guard thee on the rough ways of the  
world.'"

'Ay,' said the King, 'and hear ye  
such a cry?  
But when did Arthur chance upon thee  
first?'

'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell  
thee true:  
He found me first when yet a little maid:  
Beaten I had been for a little fault

Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran  
And flung myself down on a bank of  
heath,

And hated this fair world and all therein,  
And wept, and wish'd that I were dead;  
and he—

I know not whether of himself he came,  
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,  
can walk

Unseen at pleasure—he was at my side,  
And spake sweet words, and comforted  
my heart,

And dried my tears, being a child with me.  
And many a time he came, and evermore  
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad  
At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
was I,

Stern too at times, and then I loved him  
not,

But sweet again, and then I loved him  
well.

And now of late I see him less and less,  
But those first days had golden hours for  
me,

For then I surely thought he would be  
king.

'But let me tell thee now another tale:  
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they  
say,

Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,  
To hear him speak before he left his life.  
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the  
mage;

And when I enter'd told me that himself  
And Merlin ever served about the King,  
Uther, before he died; and on the night  
When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two  
Left the still King, and passing forth to  
breathe,

Then from the castle gateway by the  
chasm

Descending thro' the dismal night—a  
night

In which the bounds of heaven and earth  
were lost—

Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps  
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape  
thereof

A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern

Bright with a shining people on the decks,  
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two

Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,

Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,

Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep

And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged  
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:

And down the wave and in the flame was borne

A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,  
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried "The King!

Here is an heir for Uther!" And the fringe

Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,

Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,  
And all at once all round him rose in fire,

So that the child and he were clothed in fire.  
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,

Free sky and stars: "And this same child," he said,

"Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace

Till this were told." And saying this the seer

Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,

Not ever to be question'd any more  
Save on the further side; but when I met  
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—

The shining dragon and the naked child  
Descending in the glory of the seas—

He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me  
In riddling triplets of old time, and said:

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!

A young man will be wiser by and by;  
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!

And truth is this to me, and that to thee;

And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?

From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou

Fear not to give this King thine only child,  
Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing  
Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old  
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,

And echo'd by old folk beside their fires  
For comfort after their wage-work is done,  
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time

Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn  
Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,

But pass, again to come; and then or now  
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
Till these and all men hail him for their king."

Shespake and King Leodogran rejoiced,  
But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'  
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,  
Field after field, up to a height, the peak  
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,

Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope

The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,

Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,

In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,  
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze

And made it thicker; while the phantom king

Sent out at times a voice; and here or there  
Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest

Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of ours,

No son of Uther, and no king of ours';  
 Till with a wink his dream was changed,  
     the haze  
 Descended, and the solid earth became  
 As nothing, but the King stood out in  
     heaven,  
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and  
     sent  
 Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,  
 Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom  
     he loved  
 And honour'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride  
     forth  
 And bring the Queen;—and watch'd him  
 from the gates:  
 And Lancelot past away among the  
     flowers,  
 (For then was latter April) and return'd  
 Among the flowers, in May, with Guine-  
     vere.  
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
     saint,  
 Chief of the church in Britain, and before  
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the  
     King  
 That morn was married, while in stainless  
     white,  
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
 And glorying in their vows and him, his  
     knights  
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.  
 Far shone the fields of May thro' open  
     door,  
 The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,  
 The Sun of May descended on their King,  
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in their  
     Queen,  
 Roll'd incense, and there past along the  
     hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, while the two  
 Swore at the shrine of Christ a deathless  
     love:  
 And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom is  
     mine.  
 Let chance what will, I love thee to the  
     death!'  
 To whom the Queen replied with drooping  
     eyes,

'King and my lord, I love thee to the  
     death!'  
 And holy Dubric spread his hands and  
     spake,  
 'Reign ye, and live and love, and make  
     the world  
 Other, and may thy Queen be one with  
     thee,  
 And all this Order of thy Table Round  
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their  
     King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left the  
     shrine  
 Great Lords from Rome before the portal  
     stood,  
 In scornful stillness gazing as they past;  
 Then while they paced a city all on fire  
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets  
     blew,  
 And Arthur's knighthood sang before the  
     King:—

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white  
     with May;  
 Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd  
     away!  
 Blow thro' the living world—"Let the  
     King reign."

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in  
     Arthur's realm?  
 Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon  
     helm,  
 Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
     King reign.

'Strike for the King and live! his  
     knights have heard  
 That God hath told the King a secret  
     word.  
 Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the  
     King reign.

'Blow trumpet! he will lift us from  
     the dust.  
 Blow trumpet! live the strength and die  
     the lust!  
 Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let  
     the King reign.



'Strike for the King and die ! and if  
thou diest,  
The King is King, and ever wills the  
highest.

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand ! Let  
the King reign.

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his  
May !

Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day !  
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand ! Let  
the King reign.

'The King will follow Christ, and we  
the King  
In whom high God hath breathed a secret  
thing.

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand ! Let the  
King reign.'

Sosang the knighthood, moving to their  
hall.

There at the banquet those great Lords  
from Rome,

The slowly-fading mistress of the world,  
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of  
yore.

But Arthur spake, 'Behold, for these have  
sworn

To wage my wars, and worship me their  
King ;

The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new ;

And we that fight for our fair father  
Christ,

Seeing that ye be grown too weak and  
old

To drive the heathen from your Roman  
wall,

No tribute will we pay' : so those great  
lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove  
with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a  
space

Were all one will, and thro' that strength  
the King

Drew in the petty principedoms under him,  
Fought, and in twelve great battles over-  
came

The heathen hordes, and made a realm  
and reign'd.

## THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE.  
THE MARRIAGE OF GERaint.  
GERaint AND ENID.  
BALIN AND BALAN.  
MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.  
THE HOLY GRAIL.  
PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.  
THE LAST TOURNAMENT.  
GUINEVERE.

### GARETH AND LYNETTE

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring  
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted  
Pine

Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.  
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as  
a false knight

Or evil king before my lance if lance  
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,  
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—  
And yet thou art but swollen with cold  
snows

And mine is living blood : thou dost His  
will,

The Maker's, and not knowest, and I  
that know,

Have strength and wit, in my good  
mother's hall

Linger with vacillating obedience,  
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and  
whistled to—

Since the good mother holds me still a  
child !

Good mother is bad mother unto me !  
A worse were better ; yet no worse  
would I.

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put  
force

To weary her ears with one continuous  
prayer,

Until she let me fly discased to sweep  
In ever-highering eagle-circles up  
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence  
swoop

Down upon all things base, and dash  
them dead,

A knight of Arthur, working out his will,  
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,  
when he came

With Modred hither in the summertime,  
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven  
knight.

Modred for want of worthier was the  
judge.

Then I so shook him in the saddle, he  
said,

“Thou hast half prevail’d against me,”  
said so—he—

Tho’ Modred biting his thin lips was mute,  
For he is alway sullen : what care I ?’

And Gareth went, and hovering round  
her chair

Ask’d, ‘Mother, tho’ ye count me still  
the child,

Sweet mother, do ye love the child ?’  
She laugh’d,

‘Thou art but a wild-goose to question  
it.’

‘Then, mother, an ye love the child,’ he  
said,

‘Being a goose and rather tame than wild,  
Hear the child’s story.’ ‘Yea, my well-  
beloved,

An ’twere but of the goose and golden  
eggs.’

And Gareth answer’d her with kindling  
eyes,

‘Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of  
mine

Was finer gold than any goose can lay ;  
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.  
And there was ever haunting round the  
palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw  
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and  
thought

“An I could climb and lay my hand upon  
it,

Then were I wealthier than a leash of  
kings.”

But ever when he reach’d a hand to climb,  
One, that had loved him from his child-  
hood, caught

And stay’d him, “Climb not lest thou  
break thy neck,

I charge thee by my love,” and so the boy,  
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake  
his neck,

But brake his very heart in pining for it,  
And past away.’

To whom the mother said,

‘True love, sweet son, had risk’d himself  
and climb’d,

And handed down the golden treasure to  
him.’

And Gareth answer’d her with kindling  
eyes,

‘Gold ? said I gold ?—ay then, why he,  
or she,

Or whosoe’er it was, or half the world  
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of  
been

Mere gold—but this was all of that true  
steel,

Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,  
And lightnings play’d about it in the  
storm,

And all the little fowl were flurried at it,  
And there were cries and clashings in the  
nest,

That sent him from his senses : let me go.’

Then Bellicent bemoan’d herself and  
said,

‘Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness ?  
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth  
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder’d  
out !

For ever since when traitor to the King  
He fought against him in the Barons’ war,  
And Arthur gave him back his territory,  
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies  
there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburi-able,

No more ; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks,  
nor knows.

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,  
Albeit neither loved with that full love  
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love :  
Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm  
the bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the  
wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang  
Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often  
chance

In those brain-stunning shocks, and  
tourney-falls,

Frights to my heart ; but stay : follow  
the deer

By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns ;  
So make thy manhood mightier day by  
day ;

Sweet is the chase : and I will seek thee  
out

Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace  
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone  
year,

Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness

I know not thee, myself, nor anything.

Stay, my best son ! ye are yet more boy  
than man.'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet for  
child,

Hear yet once more the story of the child.  
For, mother, there was once a King, like  
ours.

The prince his heir, when tall and  
marriageable,

Ask'd for a bride ; and thereupon the  
King

Set two before him. One was fair,  
strong, arm'd—

But to be won by force—and many men  
Desired her ; one, good lack, no man  
desired.

And these were the conditions of the  
King :

That save he won the first by force, he  
needs

Must wed that other, whom no man  
desired,

A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,

That evermore she long'd to hide herself,  
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—  
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died  
of her.

And one—they call'd her Fame ; and  
one,—O Mother,

How can ye keep me tether'd to you—  
Shame.

Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.  
Follow the deer ? follow the Christ, the

King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow  
the King—

Else, wherefore born ?'

To whom the mother said,

'Sweet son, for there be many who deem  
him not,

Or will not deem him, wholly proven  
King—

Albeit in mine own heart I knew him  
King,

When I was frequent with him in my  
youth,

And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted  
him

No more than he, himself ; but felt him  
mine,

Of closest kin to me : yet—wilt thou leave  
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine  
all,

Life, limbs, for one that is not proven  
King ?

Stay, till the cloud that settles round his  
birth

Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not  
an hour,

So that ye yield me—I will walk thro'  
fire,

Mother, to gain it—your full leave to  
go.

Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd  
Rome

From off the threshold of the realm, and  
crush'd

The Idolaters, and made the people free ?  
Who should be King save him who  
makes us free ?'

So when the Queen, who long had  
sought in vain  
To break him from the intent to which  
he grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,  
She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk thro'  
fire?  
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the  
smoke.  
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee  
knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,  
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,  
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to  
the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking  
at him,  
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to  
Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats and  
drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-  
knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across the  
bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and  
a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when  
her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-  
proud  
To pass thereby; so should he rest with  
her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of  
arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,  
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,  
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,  
And since thou art my mother, must  
obey.  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;

For hence will I, disguised, and hire my-  
self  
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-  
knaves;  
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the  
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's  
eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he  
turn'd,  
Perplexed his outward purpose, till an hour,  
When waken'd by the wind which with  
full voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to  
dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling two  
That still had tended on him from his  
birth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him,  
went.

The three were clad like tillers of the  
soil.  
Southward they set their faces. The birds  
made  
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into  
green,  
And the live green had kindled into  
flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on  
the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of Came-  
lot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the Royal  
mount,  
That rose between the forest and the field.  
At times the summit of the high city  
flash'd;  
At times the spires and turrets half-way  
down  
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great  
gate shone  
Only, that open'd on the field below:  
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,  
 One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.  
 Here is a city of Enchanters, built  
 By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd him,  
 'Lord, we have heard from our wise man  
 at home  
 To Northward, that this King is not the  
 King,  
 But only changeling out of Fairyland,  
 Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery  
 And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first  
 again,  
 'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
 But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them  
 With laughter, swearing he had glamour  
 enow  
 In his own blood, his principedom, youth  
 and hopes,  
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;  
 So push'd them all unwilling toward the  
 gate.  
 And there was no gate like it under  
 heaven.  
 For barefoot on the keystone, which was  
 lined  
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
 The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress  
 Wept from her sides as water flowing away;  
 But like the cross her great and goodly  
 arms  
 Stretch'd under all the cornice and  
 upheld:  
 And drops of water fell from either hand;  
 And down from one a sword was hung,  
 from one  
 A censer, either worn with wind and  
 storm;  
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;  
 And in the space to left of her, and right,  
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
 New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
 Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
 Were giddy gazing there; and over all  
 High on the top were those three Queens,  
 the friends  
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
 need.

T

Then those with Gareth for so long a  
 space  
 Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd  
 The dragon-boughts and elvish emblem-  
 ings  
 Began to move, seethe, twine and curl:  
 they call'd  
 To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his  
 eyes  
 So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to  
 move.  
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.  
 Back from the gate started the three, to  
 whom  
 From out thereunder came an ancient  
 man,  
 Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my  
 sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the soil,  
 Who leaving share in furrow come to see  
 The glories of our King: but these, my  
 men,  
 (Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)  
 Doubt if the King be King at all, or come  
 From Fairyland; and whether this be built  
 By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens;  
 Or whether there be any city at all,  
 Or all a vision: and this music now  
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou  
 these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer play-  
 ing on him  
 And saying, 'Son, I have seen the good  
 ship sail  
 Keel upward, and mast downward, in  
 the heavens,  
 And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:  
 And here is truth; but an it please thee  
 not,  
 Take thou the truth as thou hast told it  
 me:  
 For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King  
 And Fairy Queens have built the city, son;  
 They came from out a sacred mountain-  
 cleft  
 Toward the sunrise, each with harp in  
 hand,

Y

And built it to the music of their harps.  
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,  
For there is nothing in it as it seems  
Saving the King; tho' some there be that  
hold

The King a shadow, and the city real:  
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou  
pass

Beneath this archway, then wilt thou  
become

A thrall to his enchantments, for the King  
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame  
A man should not be bound by, yet the  
which

No man can keep; but, so thou dread to  
swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide  
Without, among the cattle of the field.  
For an ye heard a music, like enow  
They are building still, seeing the city is  
built

To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake

Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine  
own beard

That looks as white as utter truth, and  
seems

Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!  
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath  
been

To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied,

'Know ye not then the Riddling of the  
Bards?

"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?

I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,  
And all that see thee, for thou art not who  
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou  
art.

And now thou goest up to mock the King,  
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here  
Turn'd to the right, and past along the  
plain;

Whom Gareth looking after said, 'My  
men,

Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.  
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:  
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with  
his twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
And stately, rich in emblem and the work  
Of ancient kings who did their days in  
stone;

Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at  
Arthur's court,

Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and every-  
where

At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening  
peak

And pinnacle, and had made it spire to  
heaven.

And ever and anon a knight would pass  
Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms  
Clash'd; and the sound was good to  
Gareth's ear.

And out of bower and casement shyly  
glanced

Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of  
love;

And all about a healthful people slept  
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard  
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld  
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall  
The splendour of the presence of the  
King

Throned, and delivering doom—and  
look'd no more—

But felt his young heart hammering in his  
ears,

And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a  
lie

The truthful King will doom me when I  
speak.'

Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes  
Of those tall knights, that ranged about  
the throne,

Clear honour shining like the dewy star



Of dawn, and faith in their great King,  
 with pure  
 Affection, and the light of victory,  
 And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther,  
 reft

From my dead lord a field with violence:  
 For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,  
 We yielded not; and then he reft us of it  
 Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye?  
 gold or field?'

To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my  
 lord,

The field was pleasant in my husband's  
 eye.'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant field  
 again,

And thrice the gold for Uther's use  
 thereof,

According to the years. No boon is here,  
 But justice, so thy say be proven true.  
 Accursed, who from the wrongs his father  
 did

Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,  
 Came yet another widow crying to him,  
 'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King,  
 am I.

With thine own hand thou slewest my  
 dear lord,

A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,  
 When Lot and many another rose and  
 fought

Against thee, saying thou wert basely  
 born.

I held with these, and loathe to ask thee  
 aught.

Yet lo! my husband's brother had my  
 son

Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved  
 him dead;

And standeth seized of that inheritance  
 Which thou that slewest the sire hast left  
 the son.

So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,  
 Grant me some knight to do the battle  
 for me,  
 Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my  
 son.'

Then strode a good knight forward,  
 crying to him,

'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.  
 Give me to right her wrong, and slay the  
 man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and  
 cried,

'A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou grant  
 her none,

This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full  
 hall—

None; or the wholesome boon of gyve  
 and gag.'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help the  
 wrong'd

Thro' all our realm. The woman loves  
 her lord.

Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and  
 hates!

The kings of old had doom'd thee to the  
 flames,

Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee  
 dead,

And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee  
 hence—

Lest that rough humour of the kings of  
 old

Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,  
 Go likewise; lay him low and slay him  
 not,

But bring him here, that I may judge the  
 right,

According to the justice of the King:

Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King  
 Who lived and died for men, the man  
 shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of  
 Mark,

A name of evil savour in the land,  
 The Cornish king. In either hand he  
 bore

What dazzled all, and shone far-off as  
 shines

A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
 Between two showers, a cloth of palest  
 gold,  
 Which down he laid before the throne,  
 and knelt,  
 Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,  
 Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot ;  
 For having heard that Arthur of his grace  
 Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,  
 knight,  
 And, for himself was of the greater state,  
 Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
 Would yield him this large honour all the  
 more ;  
 So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of  
 gold,  
 In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to  
 rend  
 In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.  
 An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The  
 goodly knight !  
 What ! shall the shield of Mark stand  
 among these ?'  
 For, midway down the side of that long  
 hall  
 A stately pile,—whereof along the front,  
 Some blazon'd, some but carven, and  
 some blank,  
 There ran a treble range of stony  
 shields,—  
 Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the  
 hearth.  
 And under every shield a knight was  
 named :  
 For this was Arthur's custom in his hall ;  
 When some good knight had done one  
 noble deed,  
 His arms were carven only ; but if twain  
 His arms were blazon'd also ; but if none,  
 The shield was blank and bare without a  
 sign  
 Saving the name beneath ; and Gareth  
 saw  
 The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and  
 bright,  
 And Modred's blank as death ; and  
 Arthur cried  
 To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

' More like are we to reave him of his  
 crown  
 Than make him knight because men call  
 him king.  
 The kings we found, ye know we stay'd  
 their hands  
 From war among themselves, but left  
 them kings ;  
 Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them  
 we enroll'd  
 Among us, and they sit within our hall.  
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name  
 of king,  
 As Mark would sully the low state of churl :  
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,  
 Return, and meet, and hold him from  
 our eyes,  
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,  
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man of  
 plots,  
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside am-  
 bushings—  
 No fault of thine : let Kay the seneschal  
 Look to thy wants, and send thee satis-  
 fied—  
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand  
 be seen !'

And many another suppliant crying  
 came  
 With noise of ravage wrought by beast  
 and man,  
 And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily  
 Down on the shoulders of the twain, his  
 men,  
 Approach'd between them toward the  
 King, and ask'd,  
 'A boon, Sir King (his voice was all  
 ashamed),  
 For see ye not how weak and hungerworn  
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me to  
 serve  
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-  
 knaves  
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my  
 name.  
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,  
'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier  
boon!

But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must  
Kay,

The master of the meats and drinks, be  
thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man  
of mien

Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself  
Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!  
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey,  
where,

God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,  
However that might chance! but an he  
work,

Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog.'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir  
Seneschal,

Slough-hound thou knowest, and gray,  
and all the hounds;

A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost  
not know:

Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,  
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and  
hands

Large, fair and fine!—Some young lad's  
mystery—

But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy  
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all  
grace,

Lest he should come to shame thy judging  
of him.'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou of  
mystery?

Think ye this fellow will poison the  
King's dish?

Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery!  
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd  
For horse and armour: fair and fine,  
forsooth!

Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see  
thou to it

That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some  
fine day

Undo thee not—and leave my man to me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;  
Ate with young lads his portion by the  
door,

And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-  
knaves.

And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,  
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,  
Would hustle and harry him, and labour  
him

Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set  
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew  
wood,

Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd  
himself

With all obedience to the King, and  
wrought

All kind of service with a noble ease  
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.  
And when the thralls had talk among  
themselves,

And one would praise the love that linkt  
the King

And Lancelot—how the King had saved  
his life

In battle twice, and Lancelot once the  
King's—

For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,  
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—  
Gareth was glad: Or if some other told,  
How once the wandering forester at dawn,  
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,  
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,  
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,  
'He passes to the Isle Avilion,

He passes and is heal'd and cannot die'—  
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were  
foul,

Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,  
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud  
That first they mock'd, but, after, rever-  
enced him.

Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale  
Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling  
way

Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held  
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates  
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,  
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
would come

Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind  
Among dead leaves, and drive them all  
apart.

Or when the thralls had sport among  
themselves,

So there were any trial of mastery,  
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone  
Was counted best; and if there chanced  
a joust,

So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,  
Would hurry thither, and when he saw  
the knights

Clash like the coming and retiring wave,  
And the spear spring, and good horse  
reel, the boy

Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the  
thralls;

But in the weeks that follow'd, the good  
Queen,

Repentant of the word she made him  
swear,

And saddening in her childless castle, sent,  
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent  
moon,

Arms for her son, and loosed him from  
his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of  
Lot

With whom he used to play at tourney  
once,

When both were children, and in lonely  
haunts

Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,  
And each at either dash from either end—  
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth  
joy.

He laugh'd; he sprang. 'Out of the  
smoke, at once

I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—  
These news be mine, none other's—nay,  
the King's—

Descend into the city': whereon he sought  
The King alone, and found, and told him  
all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in  
a tilt

For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.

Make me thy knight—in secret! let my  
name

Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I  
spring

Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye  
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush,  
and bow

Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd  
him,

'Son, the good mother let me know thee  
here,

And sent her wish that I would yield thee  
thine.

Make thee my knight? my knights are  
sworn to vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from  
his knees,

'My King, for hardihood I can promise  
thee.

For uttermost obedience make demand  
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
No mellow master of the meats and  
drinks!

And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,  
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—  
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,  
but he,

Our noblest brother, and our truest man,  
And one with me in all, he needs must  
know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let  
Lancelot know,  
Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King—  
'But wherefore would ye men should  
wonder at you?

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their  
King,

And the deed's sake my knighthood do  
the deed,

Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,  
 'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking  
 of it?

Let be my name until I make my name !  
 My deeds will speak : it is but for a day.'  
 So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm  
 Smiled the great King, and half-unwill-  
 ingly

Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to  
 him.

Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,  
 'I have given him the first quest : he is  
 not proven.

Look therefore when he calls for this in  
 hall,

Thou get to horse and follow him far away.  
 Cover the lions on thy shield, and see  
 Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor  
 slain.'

Then that same day there past into the  
 hall

A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
 May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
 blossom,

Hawk-eyes ; and lightly was her slender  
 nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower ;  
 She into hall past with her page and cried,

'O King, for thou hast driven the foe  
 without,

See to the foe within ! bridge, ford, beset  
 By bandits, everyone that owns a tower  
 The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye  
 there ?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were  
 king,

Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free  
 From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-  
 cloth

From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor  
 mine

Rest : so my knighthood keep the vows  
 they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm shall  
 be

Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.  
 What is thy name ? thy need ?'

'My name?' she said--

'Lynette my name ; noble ; my need, a  
 knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
 A lady of high lineage, of great lands,  
 And comely, yea, and comelier than my-  
 self.

She lives in Castle Perilous : a river  
 Runs in three loops about her living-  
 place ;

And o'er it are three passings, and three  
 knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
 fourth

And of that four the mightiest, holds her  
 stay'd

In her own castle, and so besieges her  
 To break her will, and make her wed with  
 him :

And but delays his purport till thou send  
 To do the battle with him, thy chief man  
 Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow ;  
 Then wed, with glory : but she will not  
 wed

Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.  
 Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd,  
 'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to  
 crush

All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these  
 four,

Who be they ? What the fashion of the  
 men ?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,  
 The fashion of that old knight-errantry  
 Who ride abroad, and do but what they  
 will ;

Courteous or bestial from the moment,  
 such

As have nor law nor king ; and three of  
 these

Proud in their fantasy call themselves the  
 Day,

Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Even-  
 ing-Star,

Being strong fools ; and never a whit more  
 wise

The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in  
 black,

A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.  
He names himself the Night and oftener  
Death,

And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,  
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,  
To show that who may slay or scape the  
three,

Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.  
And all these four befools, but mighty men,  
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he  
rose,

A head with kindling eyes above the  
throng,

'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then—  
for he mark'd

Kay near him groaning like a wounded  
bull—

'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-  
knave am I,

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
am I,

And I can topple over a hundred such.

Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing  
at him,

Brought down a momentary brow.

'Rough, sudden,

And pardonable, worthy to be knight—

Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,  
pride, wrath

Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,  
'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief  
knight,

And thou hast given me but a kitchen-  
knave.'

Then ere a man in hall could stay her,  
turn'd,

Fled down the lane of access to the King,  
Took horse, descended the slope street,  
and past

The weird white gate, and paused without,  
beside

The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-  
knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from the  
hall,

At one end one, that gave upon a range

Of level pavement where the King would  
pace

At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;  
And down from this a lordly stairway  
sloped

Till lost in blowing trees and tops of  
towers;

And out by this main doorway past the  
King.

But one was counter to the hearth, and  
rose

High that the highest-crested helm could  
ride

Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry  
fled

The damsel in her wrath, and on to this  
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the  
door

King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a  
town,

A warhorse of the best, and near it stood  
The two that out of north had follow'd  
him:

This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that  
held

The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth  
loosed

A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to  
heel,

A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,  
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,  
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and  
flash'd as those

Dull-coated things, that making slide  
apart

Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there  
burns

A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.  
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.

Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the  
shield

And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of  
grain

Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and  
tipt

With trenchant steel, around him slowly  
prest

The people, while from out of kitchen came  
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had  
work'd



Lustier than any, and whom they could  
but love,  
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and  
cried,  
'God bless the King, and all his fellow-  
ship !'  
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode  
Down the slope street, and past without  
the gate.

So Gareth past with joy ; but as the cur  
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his  
cause  
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being  
named,  
His owner, but remembers all, and growls  
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door  
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used  
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest  
With horse and arms—the King hath past  
his time—  
My scullion knave ! Thralls to your work  
again,  
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine !  
Will there be dawn in West and eve in  
East ?  
Begone !—my knave !—belike and like  
enow  
Some old head-blow not heeded in his  
youth  
So shook his wits they wander in his  
prime—  
Crazed ! How the villain lifted up his  
voice,  
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-  
knave.  
Tut : he was tame and meek enow with  
me,  
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.  
Well—I will after my loud knave, and  
learn  
Whether he know me for his master yet.  
Out of the smoke he came, and so my  
lance  
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the  
mire—  
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,  
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,  
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the  
King,  
For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
But ever meekly served the King in thee ?  
Abide : take counsel ; for this lad is great  
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and  
sword.'  
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are  
overfine  
To mar stout knaves with foolish cour-  
tesies' :  
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode  
Down the slope city, and out beyond the  
gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet  
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did the  
King  
Scorn me ? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt,  
at least  
He might have yielded to me one of those  
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,  
Rather than—O sweet heaven ! O fie  
upon him—  
His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew  
(And there were none but few goodlier  
than he)  
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.  
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one  
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the  
holt,  
And deems it carrion of some woodland  
thing,  
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose  
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling,  
'Hence !  
Avoid, thou smell'st all of kitchen-grease.  
And look who comes behind,' for there  
was Kay.  
'Knowest thou not me ? thy master ? I  
am Kay.  
We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,  
'Master no more ! too well I know thee,  
ay—  
The most ungente knight in Arthur's  
hall.'

'Have at thee then,' said Kay: they  
shock'd, and Kay  
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,  
'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she  
fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly  
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse  
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,  
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke.

'What doest thou, scullion, in my  
fellowship?  
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the  
more

Or love thee better, that by some device  
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,  
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy  
master—thou!—

Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—  
to me

Thou smellest all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently,  
'say

Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,  
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?  
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he  
talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the  
manner of it.

But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with,  
knave,

And then by such a one that thou for all  
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
Shalt not once dare to look him in the  
face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile  
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd  
again

Down the long avenues of a boundless  
wood,

And Gareth following was again beknaved.

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the  
only way

Where Arthur's men are set along the  
wood;

The wood is nigh as full of thieves as  
leaves:

If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,  
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of  
thine?

Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the  
only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong  
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;

Then after one long slope was mounted,  
saw,

Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand  
pines

A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
To westward—in the deeps whereof a  
mere,

Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,  
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and  
shouts

Ascended, and there brake a servingman  
Flying from out of the black wood, and  
crying,

'They have bound my lord to cast him in  
the mere.'

Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the  
wrong'd,

But straitlier bound am I to bide with  
thee.'

And when the damsel spake contemptu-  
ously,

'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,  
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the  
pines

He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd  
nigh the mere,

And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and  
reed,

Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,  
A stone about his neck to drown him  
in it.

Three with good blows he quieted, but  
three

Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed  
the stone

From off his neck, then in the mere beside  
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.  
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free  
feet

Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff  
 rogues  
 Had wreak'd themselves on me; good  
 cause is theirs  
 To hate me, for my wont hath ever been  
 To catch my thief, and then like vermin  
 here  
 Drown him, and with a stone about his  
 neck;  
 And under this wan water many of them  
 Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,  
 And rise, and flickering in a grimly light  
 Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have  
 saved a life  
 Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this  
 wood.  
 And fain would I reward thee worship-  
 fully.  
 What guerdon will ye?'

Gareth sharply spake,  
 'None! for the deed's sake have I done  
 the deed,  
 In uttermost obedience to the King.  
 But wilt thou yield this damsel harbour-  
 age?'

Whereat the Baron saying, 'I well  
 believe  
 You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh  
 Broke from Lynette, 'Ay, truly of a truth,  
 And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-  
 knave!—  
 But deem not I accept thee aught the  
 more,  
 Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
 Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
 A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.  
 Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen  
 still.  
 But an this lord will yield us harbourage,  
 Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the  
 wood,  
 All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
 His towers where that day a feast had  
 been  
 Held in high hall, and many a viand left,  
 And many a costly cate, received the  
 three.

And there they placed a peacock in his  
 pride  
 Before the damsel, and the Baron set  
 Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much dis-  
 courtesy,  
 Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at myside.  
 Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's  
 hall,  
 And pray'd the King would grant me  
 Lancelot  
 To fight the brotherhood of Day and  
 Night—  
 The last a monster unsubduable  
 Of any save of him for whom I call'd—  
 Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-  
 knave,  
 "The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave  
 am I,  
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
 am I."  
 Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,  
 "Go therefore," and so gives the quest  
 to him—  
 Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine  
 Than ride abroad redressing women's  
 wrong,  
 Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed,  
 the lord  
 Now look'd at one and now at other, left  
 The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
 And, seating Gareth at another board,  
 Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-  
 knave, or not,  
 Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,  
 And whether she be mad, or else the  
 King,  
 Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
 I ask not: but thou strikest a strong  
 stroke,  
 For strong thou art and goodly there-  
 withal,  
 And savor of my life; and therefore now,  
 For here be mighty men to joust with,  
 weigh

Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel  
back

To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
Thy pardon ; I but speak for thine avail,  
The saver of my life.'

And Gareth said,  
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
Despite of Day and Night and Death and  
Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose  
life he saved  
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on  
their way  
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth  
spake,  
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she  
replied,

'I fly no more : I allow thee for an  
hour.  
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,  
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,  
methinks  
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt  
thou, fool ?  
For hard by here is one will overthrow  
And slay thee : then will I to court again,  
And shame the King for only yielding  
me  
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd cour-  
teously,  
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.  
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt  
find  
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
Among the ashes and wedded the King's  
son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long  
loops  
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they  
came.  
Rough-thicketed were the banks and  
steep ; the stream  
Full, narrow ; this a bridge of single arc  
Took at a leap ; and on the further side  
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold

In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in  
hue,  
Save that the dome was purple, and above,  
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.  
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced  
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this  
he,  
The champion thou hast brought from  
Arthur's hall ?  
For whom we let thee pass.' 'Nay, nay,'  
she said,  
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter  
scorn  
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee  
here  
His kitchen-knave : and look thou to  
thyself :  
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
And slay thee unarm'd : he is not knight  
but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the  
Dawn,  
And servants of the Morning-Star, ap-  
proach,  
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds  
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair  
girls  
In gilt and rosy raiment came : their feet  
In dewy grasses glisten'd ; and the hair  
All over glanced with dewdrop or with  
gem  
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave  
a shield  
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.  
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,  
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was  
brought,  
Glorying ; and in the stream beneath him,  
shone  
Immingled with Heaven's azure waver-  
ingly,  
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,  
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Wherefore  
stare ye so ?  
Thou shakest in thy fear : there yet is  
time :

Flee down the valley before he get to horse.  
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave.'

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether knave or knight,  
Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.  
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;  
But truly foul are better, for they send  
That strength of anger thro' mine arms,  
I know  
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore  
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge,  
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!  
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.  
For this were shame to do him further wrong  
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse  
And arms, and so return him to the King.  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.  
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest.  
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own.'  
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear  
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,  
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,  
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand  
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,  
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!'

Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke  
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my life: I yield.'  
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me  
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'  
She reddening, 'Insolent scullion: I of thee?  
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!'  
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there unlaced  
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,  
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay  
One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel, thy charge  
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,  
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise  
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say  
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave  
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.  
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.  
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel, thou,  
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.  
Then when he came upon her, spake,  
'Methought,  
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge  
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me  
A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed:  
Iscent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,  
'"O morning star" (not that tall felon there  
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness  
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),  
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,  
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a ford—

The second brother in their fool's parable—  
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.  
Care not for shame : thou art not knight  
but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laugh-  
ingly,  
'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.  
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest  
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my  
co-mates  
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his  
coat,  
"Guard it," and there was none to meddle  
with it.  
And such a coat art thou, and thee the  
King  
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,  
To worry, and not to flee—and—knight  
or knave—  
The knave that doth thee service as full  
knight  
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!  
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a  
knight,  
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me  
the more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine  
enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet  
thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-  
loop,  
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail  
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday  
Sun  
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,  
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,  
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the  
fierce shield,  
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying  
blots  
Before them when he turn'd from watch-  
ing him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow  
roar'd,  
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches  
here?'  
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,  
Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's  
hall  
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath  
his arms.'  
'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and vizoring up a  
red  
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,  
Push'd horse across the foamings of the  
ford,  
Whom Gareth met midstream : no room  
was there  
For lance or tourney-skill : four strokes  
they struck  
With sword, and these were mighty ; the  
new knight  
Had fear he might be shamed ; but as  
the Sun  
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the  
fifth,  
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream,  
the stream  
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the  
ford ;  
So drew him home ; but he that fought  
no more,  
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded ; and Gareth sent him to the  
King.  
'Myself when I return will plead for thee.'  
'Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.  
'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed  
again?'  
'Nay, not a point : nor art thou victor  
here.  
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford ;  
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I  
saw it.

' "O Sun" (not this strong fool whom  
thou, Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),  
"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or  
pain,



O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of lovesong or of  
love?  
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly  
born,  
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea,  
perchance,—

"O dewy flowers that open to the  
sun,  
O dewy flowers that close when day is  
done,  
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except,  
belikè,  
To garnish meats with? hath not our  
good King  
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchen-  
dom,  
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye  
round  
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's  
head?  
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries  
and bay.

"O birds, that warble to the morning  
sky,  
O birds that warble as the day goes by,  
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark,  
mavis, merle,  
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter  
forth  
May-music growing with the growing  
light,  
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the  
snare  
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit,  
Larding and basting. See thou have not  
now  
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.  
There stands the third fool of their  
allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble  
bow,

All in a rose-red from the west, and all  
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad  
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the  
knight,  
That named himself the Star of Evening,  
stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the  
madman there  
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she  
cried,

'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins  
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave  
His armour off him, these will turn the  
blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the  
bridge,  
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?  
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain  
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel  
cried,

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's  
heaven  
With all disaster unto thine and thee!  
For both thy younger brethren have gone  
down  
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir  
Star;  
Art thou not old?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,  
Old, with the might and breath of twenty  
boys.'  
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in  
brag!  
But that same strength which threw the  
Morning Star  
Can throw the Evening.'

Then that other blew  
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.  
'Approach and arm me!' With slow  
steps from out  
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd  
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,  
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought  
a helm

With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
And gave a shield whereon the Star of  
Even

Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone.

But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,  
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge ;  
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,  
There met him drawn, and overthrew him  
again,

But up like fire he started : and as oft  
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his  
knees,

So many a time he vaulted up again ;  
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great  
heart,

Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,  
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one  
That all in later, sadder age begins  
To war against ill uses of a life,

But these from all his life arise, and cry,  
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not  
put us down !'

He half despairs ; so Gareth seem'd to  
strike

Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the  
while,

'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken,  
O good knight-knave—

O knave, as noble as any of all the  
knights—

Shame me not, shame me not. I have  
prophesied—

Strike, thou art worthy of the Table  
Round—

His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd  
skin—

Strike—strike—the wind will never  
change again.'

And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,  
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off  
him,

But lash'd in vain against the harden'd  
skin,

And could not wholly bring him under,  
more

Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge  
on ridge,

The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and  
springs

For ever ; till at length Sir Gareth's brand  
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the  
hilt.

'I have thee now' ; but forth that other  
sprang,

And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry  
arms

Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
Strangled, and so straining ev'n his uttermost  
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the  
bridge

Down to the river, sink or swim, and  
cried,

'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said,

'I lead no longer ; ride thou at my side ;  
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-  
knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy  
plain,

O rainbow with three colours after rain,  
Shine sweetly : thrice my love hath smiled  
on me."

'Sir,—and, good faith, I fain had  
added—Knight,

But that I heard thee call thyself a  
knave,—

Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
Missaid thee ; noble I am ; and thought  
the King

Scorn'd me and mine ; and now thy  
pardon, friend,

For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
And wholly bold thou art, and meek  
withal

As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
Hast mazed my wit : I marvel what thou  
art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to  
blame,

Saving that you mistrusted our good King  
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking,  
one

Not fit to cope your quest. You said  
your say ;

Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth !  
I hold

He scarce is knight, yea but half-man,  
 nor meet  
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat  
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness.  
 Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings  
 fought for me:  
 And seeing now thy words are fair,  
 methinks  
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his  
 great self,  
 Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour  
 When the lonehern forgets his melancholy,  
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching,  
 dreams  
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at  
 him,  
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
 Where bread and baken meats and good  
 red wine  
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors  
 Had sent her coming champion, waited  
 him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights  
 on horse  
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning  
 hues.  
 'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once  
 was here,  
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the  
 rock  
 The war of Time against the soul of man.  
 And yon four fools have suck'd their  
 allegory  
 From these damp walls, and taken but  
 the form.  
 Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt  
 and read—  
 In letters like to those the vexillary  
 Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming  
 Gelt—

'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—  
 'HESPERUS'—  
 'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures,  
 armed men,

Slab after slab, their faces forward all,  
 And running down the Soul, a Shape that  
 fled  
 With broken wings, torn raiment and  
 loose hair,  
 For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.  
 'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,  
 Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first  
 Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
 To Camelot, then by what thereafter  
 chanced,  
 The damsel's headlong error thro' the  
 wood—  
 Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-  
 loops—  
 His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew  
 Behind the twain, and when he saw the  
 star  
 Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him,  
 cried,  
 'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my  
 friend.'  
 And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;  
 But when they closed—in a moment—at  
 one touch  
 Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the  
 world—  
 Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
 That when he found the grass within his  
 hands  
 He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon  
 Lynette:  
 Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and  
 overthrown,  
 And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,  
 Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast  
 in vain?'  
 'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son  
 Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-  
 cent,  
 And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
 And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by  
 whom  
 I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—  
 Device and sorcery and unhappiness—  
 Out, sword; we are thrown!' And  
 Lancelot answer'd, 'Prince,  
 O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness

Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,  
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,  
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot!—  
thine the hand  
That threw me? An some chance to mar  
the boast  
Thy brethren of thee make—which could  
not chance—  
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,  
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot  
—thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant, 'Lancelot,  
Why came ye not, when call'd? and  
wherefore now  
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my  
knave,  
Who being still rebuked, would answer  
still  
Courteous as any knight—but now, if  
knight,  
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd  
and trick'd,  
And only wondering wherefore play'd  
upon:  
And doubtful whether I and mine be  
scorn'd.  
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's  
hall,  
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave,  
prince and fool,  
I hate thee and for ever.'

And Lancelot said,  
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight  
art thou  
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be  
you wise  
To call him shamed, who is but over-  
thrown?  
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many  
a time.  
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,  
And overthrower from being overthrown.  
With sword we have not striven; and  
thy good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I felt  
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance  
of thine.  
Well hast thou done; for all the stream  
is freed,  
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his  
foes,  
And when reviled, hast answer'd graci-  
ously,  
And makest merry when overthrown.  
Prince, Knight,  
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our  
Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he  
told  
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,  
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than being  
fool'd  
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,  
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and  
drinks  
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.  
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.  
Seek, till we find.' And when they  
sought and found,  
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life  
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden  
gazed.  
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to  
sleep hast thou.  
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to  
him  
As any mother? Ay, but such a one  
As all day long hath rated at her child,  
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep—  
Good lord, how sweetly smells the  
honeysuckle  
In the hush'd night, as if the world were  
one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!  
O Lancelot, Lancelot'—and she clapt  
her hands—  
'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave  
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn  
have I,  
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,  
To bring thee back to do the battle with  
him.  
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;

Who doubts thee victor? so will my  
knight-knave  
Miss the full flower of this accomplish-  
ment.'

Said Lancelot, 'Peradventure he, you  
name,  
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an  
he will,  
Change his for mine, and take my charger,  
fresh,  
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as  
well  
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,'  
she said,  
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in  
all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd  
the shield;  
'Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on whom  
all spears  
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!  
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your  
lord!—  
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for  
you.  
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these  
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will  
not shame  
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.  
Hence: let us go.'

Silent the silent field  
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'  
summer-wan,

In counter motion to the clouds, allured  
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his  
liege.

A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe  
falls!'

An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor peal-  
ing there!'

Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent  
him, crying,

'Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he must  
fight:

I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday  
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on  
Lancelot now

To lend thee horse and shield: wonders  
ye have done;

Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow  
In having flung the three: I see thee  
maim'd,

Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling  
the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all  
ye know.

You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or  
voice,

Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery  
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,  
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,  
Seeing he never rides abroad by day;  
But watch'd him have I like a phantom  
pass

Chilling the night: nor have I heard the  
voice.

Always he made his mouthpiece of a page  
Who came and went, and still reported  
him

As closing in himself the strength of ten,  
And when his anger tare him, massacring  
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the soft  
babe!

Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant  
flesh,

Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot  
first,

The quest is Lancelot's: give him back  
the shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for  
this,

Belike he wins it as the better man:  
Thus—and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged  
All the devisings of their chivalry

When one might meet a mightier than  
himself;

How best to manage horse, lance, sword  
and shield,

And so fill up the gap where force might  
fail

With skill and fineness. Instant were  
his words.

Then Gareth, 'Here be rules. I know  
but one—  
To dash against mine enemy and to win.  
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the  
joust,  
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thee,'  
sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that  
grew  
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they  
rode  
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,  
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,  
'There.'  
And all the three were silent seeing,  
pitch'd  
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
Sunder the glooming crimson on the  
marge,  
Black, with black banner, and a long  
black horn  
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth  
graspt,  
And so, before the two could hinder him,  
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the  
horn.  
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon  
Came lights and lights, and once again  
he blew;  
Whereon were hollow tramlings up and  
down  
And muffled voices heard, and shadows  
past;  
Till high above him, circled with her  
maids,  
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him  
White hands, and courtesy; but when  
the Prince  
Three times had blown—after long hush  
—at last—  
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
Thro' those black foldings, that which  
housed therein.  
High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack  
arms,  
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs  
of Death,

And crown'd with fleshless laughter—  
some ten steps—  
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—  
advanced  
The monster, and then paused, and spake  
no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,  
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength  
of ten,  
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God  
hath given,  
But must, to make the terror of thee more,  
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries  
Of that which Life hath done with, and  
the clod,  
Less dull than thou, will hide with  
mantling flowers  
As if for pity?' But he spake no word;  
Which set the horror higher: a maiden  
swoon'd;  
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and  
wept,  
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and  
Death;  
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his  
helm;  
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm  
blood felt  
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were  
aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely  
neigh'd,  
And Death's dark war-horse bounded  
forward with him.  
Then those that did not blink the terror,  
saw  
That Death was cast to ground, and  
slowly rose.  
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the  
skull.  
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.  
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the  
helm  
As throughly as the skull; and out from  
this  
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy  
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,  
'Knight,



Slay me not : my three brethren bad me  
do it,

To make a horror all about the house,  
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.  
They never dream'd the passes would be  
past.'

Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair  
child,

What madness made thee challenge the  
chief knight

Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bad  
me do it.

They hate the King, and Lancelot, the  
King's friend,

They hoped to slay him somewhere on  
the stream,

They never dream'd the passes could be  
past.'

Then sprang the happier day from  
underground ;

And Lady Lyonors and her house, with  
dance

And revel and song, made merry over  
Death,

As being after all their foolish fears

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.

So large mirth lived and Gareth won the  
quest.

And he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

### THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's  
court,

A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of  
Heaven.

And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved  
Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day,

In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's  
eye,

Who first had found and loved her in a  
state

Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendour ; and the Queen  
herself,

Grateful to Prince Geraint for service  
done,

Loved her, and often with her own white  
hands

Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.

And Enid loved the Queen, and with true  
heart

Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.

And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced  
Geraint.

But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,

Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet  
was heard

The world's loud whisper breaking into  
storm,

Not less Geraint believed it ; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,

Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint

In nature : wherefore going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his principedom

lay

Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff

knights,  
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand

Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law :  
And therefore, till the King himself

should please

To cleanse this common sewer of all his  
realm,

He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches ; and the

King

Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,

And fifty knights rode with them, to the  
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own land ;

Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his principedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all  
gone,

And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's  
eyes :

This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless  
love,

Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the  
more :

And day by dayshe thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy ;  
While he that watch'd her sadden, was  
the more

Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer  
morn

(They sleeping each by either) the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the  
room,

And heated the strong warrior in his  
dreams ;

Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his  
throat,

The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle  
sloped,

As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he ?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk

And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

' O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is  
gone ?

I *am* the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they  
say.

And yet I hate that he should linger here ;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mighty hand striking  
great blows

At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his  
eyes,

Than that my lord thro' me should suffer  
shame.

Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierced to death before mine  
eyes,

And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy ?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.'

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her  
weep

True tears upon his broad and naked  
breast,

And these awoke him, and by great mis-  
chance

He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, ' In spite of all my  
care,

For all my pains, poor man, for all my  
pains,

She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's  
hall.'

Then tho' he loved and revered her  
too much

To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right thro' his manful breast darted the  
pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.  
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of  
bed,

And shook his drowsy squire awake and  
cried,

'My charger and her palfrey'; then to her,  
'I will ride forth into the wilderness;  
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fall'n so low as some would  
wish.

And tho't, put on thy worst and meanest  
dress

And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd,  
amazed,

'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'  
But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey.'

Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
With sprigs of summer laid between the  
folds,

She took them, and array'd herself therein,  
Remembering when first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her  
in it,

And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey to her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
First seen that day: these things he told  
the King.

Then the good King gave order to let blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.  
And when the Queen petition'd for his  
leave

To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.

So with the morning all the court were  
gone.

But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her  
love

For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;  
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd  
the wood;

There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard  
instead

A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince  
Geraint,

Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow  
ford

Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.

Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd  
him:

'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later  
than we!'

'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and  
so late

That I but come like you to see the  
hunt,

Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,'  
she said;

'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall hear  
the hounds:

Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant  
hunt,

And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth,  
there rode

Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;  
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the  
knight

Had vizzor up, and show'd a youthful face,

Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the King's hall, desired his name, and  
sent

Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;  
Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not  
know.

'Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.  
'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried  
the dwarf;

'Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of  
him';

And when she put her horse toward the  
knight,

Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd

Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the name,'  
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it  
of him,

Who answer'd as before; and when the  
Prince

Had put his horse in motion toward the  
knight,

Struck at him with his whip, and cut his  
cheek.

The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:  
But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,  
refrain'd

From ev'n a word, and so returning said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself:  
And I will track this vermin to their  
earths:

For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at,  
arms

On loan, or else for pledge; and, being  
found,

Then will I fight him, and will break his  
pride,

And on the third day will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the  
stately Queen.

'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all;  
And may you light on all things that you  
love,

And live to wed with her whom first you  
love:

But ere you wed with any, bring your  
bride,

And I, were she the daughter of a  
king,

Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the  
hedge,

Will clothe her for her bridals like the  
sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that  
he heard

The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy  
glade

And valley, with fixt eye following the  
three.

At last they issued from the world of  
wood,

And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky,  
and sank.

And thither came Geraint, and under-  
neath

Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side whereof,  
White from the mason's hand, a fortress  
rose;

And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry  
ravine:

And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the  
three,

And enter'd, and were lost behind the  
walls.

'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd  
him to his earth.'

And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot  
hiss

And bustling whistle of the youth who  
scour'd

His master's armour; and of such a one  
He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in  
the town?'

Who told him, scouring still, 'The  
sparrow-hawk!'

Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the  
hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-  
hawk.'

Then riding further past an armourer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above  
his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him,  
said:

'Friend, he that labours for the sparrow-  
hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.'  
Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden  
spleen:

'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-  
hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck  
him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world! What is it  
to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-  
hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-  
mad,

Where can I get me harbourage for the  
night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy?  
Speak!

Whereat the armourer turning all amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
Came forward with the helmet yet in  
hand

And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger  
knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
And there is scanty time for half the work.  
Arms? truth! I know not: all are  
wanted here.

Harbourage? truth, good truth, I know  
not, save,

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work  
again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry  
ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and  
said:

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint  
replied,

'O friend, I seek a harbourage for the  
night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-  
door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied  
Geraint;

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-  
hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours'  
fast.'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed  
Earl,

And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours  
is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-  
hawk:

But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly  
star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed  
with fern;

And here had fall'n a great part of a  
tower,

Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the  
cliff,

And like a crag was gay with wilding  
flowers :

And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent,  
wound

Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred  
arms,

And suck'd the joining of the stones, and  
look'd

A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the hall,  
Singing ; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form ;  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint ;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green  
and red,

And he suspends his converse with a  
friend,

Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
To think or say, ' There is the nightingale ' ;  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought  
and said,

' Here, by God's grace, is the one voice  
for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang  
was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid  
sang :

' Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and  
lower the proud ;

Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine,  
storm, and cloud ;

Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
hate.

' Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with  
smile or frown ;

With that wild wheel we go not up or  
down ;

Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great.

' Smile and we smile, the lords of many  
lands ;

Frown and we smile, the lords of our  
own hands ;

For man is man and master of his fate.

' Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring  
crowd ;

Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the  
cloud ;

Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor  
hate.'

' Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn  
the nest,'

Said Yniol ; ' enter quickly.' Entering  
then,

Right o'er a mound of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim bro-  
cade ;

And near her, like a blossom vermeil-  
white,

That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought  
Geraint,

' Here by God's rood is the one maid for  
me.'

But none spake word except the hoary  
Earl :

' Enid, the good knight's horse stands in  
the court ;

Take him to stall, and give him corn, and  
then

Go to the town and buy us flesh and  
wine ;

And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great.'

He spake : the Prince, as Enid past  
him, fain

To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught



His purple scarf, and held, and said,  
‘Forbear!

Rest! the good house, tho’ ruin’d, O my  
son,

Endures not that her guest should serve  
himself.’

And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall;  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach’d the town, and while the  
Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and  
wine.

And Enid brought sweet cakes to make  
them cheer,

And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also  
serve

For kitchen, boil’d the flesh, and spread  
the board,

And stood behind, and waited on the  
three.

And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it  
down:

But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his  
veins,

Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall;

Then suddenly address the hoary Earl:

‘Fair Host and Earl, I pray your  
courtesy;

This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell me  
of him.

His name? but no, good faith, I will not  
have it:

For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason’s hand, then have  
I sworn

From his own lips to have it—I am  
Geraint

Of Devon—for this morning when the  
Queen

Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she re-  
turn’d

Indignant to the Queen; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have  
it of him.

And all unarm’d I rode, and thought to  
find

Arms in your town, where all the men  
are mad;

They take the rustic murmur of their  
bourg

For the great wave that echoes round the  
world;

They would not hear me speak: but if  
ye know

Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have  
sworn

That I will break his pride and learn his  
name,

Avenging this great insult done the  
Queen.’

Then cried Earl Yniol, ‘Art thou he  
indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by your  
state

And presence might have guess’d you one  
of those

That eat in Arthur’s hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery;  
For this dear child hath often heard me  
praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused

Hath ask’d again, and ever loved to hear;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong:  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden; first Limours,

A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,  
 Drunk even when he woo'd; and be he dead  
 I know not, but he past to the wild land.  
 The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,  
 My curse, my nephew—I will not let his name  
 Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
 When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
 Refused her to him, then his pride awoke;  
 And since the proud man often is the mean,  
 He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
 Affirming that his father left him gold,  
 And in my charge, which was not render'd to him;  
 Bribed with large promises the men who served  
 About my person, the more easily  
 Because my means were somewhat broken into  
 Thro' open doors and hospitality;  
 Raised my own town against me in the night  
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house;  
 From mine own earldom foully ousted me;  
 Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
 For truly there are those who love me yet;  
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
 Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,  
 But that his pride too much despises me:  
 And I myself sometimes despise myself;  
 For I have let men be, and have their way;  
 Am much too gentle, have not used my power:  
 Nor know I whether I be very base  
 Or very manful, whether very wise  
 Or very foolish; only this I know,  
 That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
 I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
 But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint,  
 'but arms,  
 That if the sparrow-hawk, this nephew,  
 fight  
 In next day's tourney I may break his pride.'

And Yniol answer'd, 'Arms, indeed,  
 but old  
 And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
 Are mine, and therefore at thine asking,  
 thine.  
 But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
 Except the lady he loves best be there.  
 Two forks are fixt into the meadow  
 ground,  
 And over these is placed a silver wand,  
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
 The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
 And this, what knight soever be in field  
 Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
 And tilts with my good nephew there-  
 upon,  
 Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
 Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
 And toppling over all antagonism  
 Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-  
 hawk.  
 But thou, that hast no lady, canst not  
 fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright  
 replied,  
 Leaning a little toward him, 'Thy leave!  
 Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
 For this dear child, because I never saw,  
 Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
 Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
 And if I fall her name will yet remain  
 Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,  
 So aid me Heaven when at mine utter-  
 most,  
 As I will make her truly my true wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
 Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
 And looking round he saw not Enid there,  
 (Who hearing her own name had stol'n  
 away)  
 But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
 And fondling all her hand in his he said,

'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the  
Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and  
she  
With frequent smile and nod departing  
found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl ;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,  
and then

On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart : but never light and  
shade

Coursed one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and  
pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her ;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle  
breast ;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it ;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness ;  
And when the pale and bloodless east  
began

To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they  
moved

Down to the meadow where the jousts  
were held,

And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when  
Geraint

Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
move

The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro'  
these

Princelike his bearing shone ; and errant  
knights

And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the  
ground,

And over these they placed the silver wand,  
And over that the golden sparrow-hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet  
blown,

Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
claim'd,

'Advance and take, as fairest of the fair,  
What I these two years past have won  
for thee,

The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the  
Prince,

'Forbear : there is a worthier,' and the  
knight

With some surprise and thrice as much  
disdain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his  
face

Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at  
Yule,

So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
'Do battle for it then,' no more ; and  
thrice

They clash'd together, and thrice they  
broke their spears.

Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd  
at each

So often and with such blows, that all the  
crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from distant  
walls

There came a clapping as of phantom  
hands.

So twice they fought, and twice they  
breathed, and still

The dew of their great labour, and the  
blood

Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
their force.

But either's force was match'd till Yniol's  
cry,

'Remember that great insult done the  
Queen,'

Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade  
aloft,

And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the  
bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his  
breast.

And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the  
fallen man

Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son of  
Nudd !

Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
My pride is broken : men have seen my  
fall.'

'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied  
Geraint,

'These two things shalt thou do, or else  
thou diest.

First, thou thyself, with damsel and with  
dwarf,

Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming  
there,

Crave pardon for that insult done the  
Queen,

And shalt abide her judgment on it ; next,  
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy  
kin.

These two things shalt thou do, or thou  
shalt die.'

And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will  
I do,

For I have never yet been overthrown,  
And thou hast overthrown me, and my  
pride

Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall !'  
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,

And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
And being young, he changed and came

to loathe  
His crime of traitor, slowly drew himself

Bright from his old dark life, and fell at  
last

In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the  
hunting-morn

Made a low splendour in the world, and  
wings

Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,

Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
Woke and bethought her of her promise

given

No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
He would not leave her, till her promise  
given—

To ride with him this morning to the  
court,

And there be made known to the stately  
Queen,

And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
And thought it never yet had look'd so  
mean.

For as a leaf in mid-November is  
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd

The dress that now she look'd on to the  
dress

She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
And still she look'd, and still the terror

grew  
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing,  
a court,

All staring at her in her faded silk :  
And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

'This noble prince who won our  
earldom back,

So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit

him !  
Would he could tarry with us here awhile,

But being so beholden to the Prince,  
It were but little grace in any of us,

Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
To seek a second favour at his hands.

Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger

lame,  
Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a  
costly gift

Of her good mother, given her on the  
night

Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd

their house,  
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :

For while the mother show'd it, and the  
two

Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they  
fled

With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought  
them bread :

And Edyrn's men had caught them in  
their flight,

And placed them in this ruin ; and she  
wish'd

The Prince had found her in her ancient  
home ;

Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she  
knew ;

And last bethought her how she used to  
watch,

Near that old home, a pool of golden carp ;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and  
lustreless

Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;  
And half asleep she made comparison  
Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;  
But this was in the garden of a king ;  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she  
knew

That all was bright ; that all about were  
birds

Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that  
look'd

Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
And lords and ladies of the high court  
went

In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
And children of the King in cloth of  
gold

Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down  
the walks ;

And while she thought 'They will not  
see me,' came

A stately queen whose name was  
Guinevere,

And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish at  
all

Let them be, gold ; and charge the  
gardeners now

To pick the faded creature from the pool,  
And cast it on the mixen that it die.'

And therewithal one came and seized on  
her,

And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,  
And lo ! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake ; and in her hand  
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :

'See here, my child, how fresh the  
colours look,

How fast they hold like colours of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the  
wave.

Why not ? It never yet was worn, I trow :  
Look on it, child, and tell me if ye know  
it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused at  
first,

Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
dream :

Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it ; your  
good gift,

So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;  
Your own good gift !' 'Yea, surely,' said  
the dame,

'And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-  
where

He found the sack and plunder of our  
house

All scatter'd thro' the houses of the town ;  
And gave command that all which once  
was ours

Should now be ours again : and yester-eve,  
While ye were talking sweetly with your  
Prince,

Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again.  
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?

For I myself unwillingly have worn  
My faded suit, as you, my child, have  
yours,

And howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and  
seneschal,  
And pastime both of hawk and hound,  
and all

That appertains to noble maintenance.  
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house;  
But since our fortune swerved from sun to  
shade,

And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need  
Constrain'd us, but a better time has  
come;

So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride:  
For tho' ye won the prize of fairest fair,  
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
And should some great court-lady say, the  
Prince

Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the  
hedge,

And like a madman brought her to the  
court,

Then were ye shamed, and, worse, might  
shame the Prince

To whom we are beholden; but I know,  
When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
That neither court nor country, tho' they  
sought

Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her  
match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out of  
breath;

And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay;  
Then, as the white and glittering star of  
morn

Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
And left her maiden couch, and robed  
herself,

Help'd by the mother's careful hand and  
eye,

Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown;  
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,  
and said,

She never yet had seen her half so fair;  
And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,  
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of  
flowers,

And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar  
first

Invaded Britain, 'But we beat him back,  
As this great Prince invaded us, and we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
with joy.

And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and  
wild;

But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the  
gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
Geraint

Woke where he slept in the high hall, and  
call'd

For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid gay  
In such apparel as might well besem  
His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my  
love,

Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded silk.'  
Yniol with that hard message went; it fell  
Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn:  
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
Dared not to glance at her good mother's  
face,

But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd  
gift,

And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus  
attired;

And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,



But rested with her sweet face satisfied ;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly  
said,

‘ O my new mother, be not wroth or  
grieved  
At thy new son, for my petition to her.  
When late I left Caerleon, our great  
Queen,

In words whose echo lasts, they were so  
sweet,

Made promise, that whatever bride I  
brought,

Herself would clothe her like the sun in  
Heaven.

Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hall,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair  
Queen,

No hand but hers, should make your Enid  
burst

Sunlike from cloud—and likewise thought  
perhaps,

That service done so graciously would  
bind

The two together ; fain I would the two  
Should love each other : how can Enid  
find

A nobler friend ? Another thought was  
mine ;

I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I  
was loved,

I doubted whether daughter's tenderness,  
Or easy nature, might not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal ;  
Or whether some false sense in her own  
self

Of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall ;  
And such a sense might make her long  
for court

And all its perilous glories : and I  
thought,

That could I somehow prove such force  
in her

Link'd with such love for me, that at a  
word

(No reason given her) she could cast aside  
A splendour dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer ; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted usage ; then I felt  
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and  
flows,

Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do  
rest,

A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us. Grant me pardon for my  
thoughts :

And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your  
costly gift

Beside your own warm hearth, with, on  
her knees,

Who knows ? another gift of the high  
God,

Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp  
you thanks.'

He spoke : the mother smiled, but half  
in tears,

Then brought a mantle down and wrapt  
her in it,

And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode  
away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had  
climb'd

The giant tower, from whose high crest,  
they say,

Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale  
of Usk,

By the flat meadow, till she saw them  
come ;

And then descending met them at the  
gates,

Embraced her with all welcome as a  
friend,

And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the  
sun ;

And all that week was old Caerleon gay,

For by the hands of Dubric, the high  
saint,  
They twain were wedded with all cere-  
mony.

And this was on the last year's Whit-  
suntide.

But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the  
court.

And now this morning when he said  
to her,  
'Put on your worst and meanest dress,'  
she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

### GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true ;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and  
reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen !

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing  
forth  
That morning, when they both had got  
to horse,  
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his  
heart,  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break  
perforce  
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :  
'Not at my side. I charge thee ride  
before,  
Ever a good way on before ; and this  
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word !' and Enid was aghast ;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three  
paces on,

When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron' ; he loosed a mighty  
purse,

Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward  
the squire.

So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing,  
strown

With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the  
squire

Chafing his shoulder : then he cried again  
'To the wilds !' and Enid leading down  
the tracks

Thro' which he bad her lead him on,  
they past

The marches, and by bandit-haunted  
holds,

Gray swamps and pools, waste places of  
the hern,

And wildernesses, perilous paths, they  
rode :

Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd  
soon :

A stranger meeting them had surely  
thought

They rode so slowly and they look'd so  
pale,

That each had suffer'd some exceeding  
wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,  
'O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her  
true'—

And there he broke the sentence in his  
heart

Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion masters  
him.

And she was ever praying the sweet  
heavens

To save her dear lord whole from any  
wound.

And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and so  
cold ;

Till the great plover's human whistle  
amazed

Her heart, and glancing round the waste  
she fear'd

In every wavering brake an ambuscade.  
Then thought again, 'If there be such in  
me,

I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it.'

But when the fourth part of the day  
was gone,

Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a  
rock

In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all ;  
And heard one crying to his fellow,  
'Look,

Here comes a laggard hanging down his  
head,

Who seems, no bolder than a beaten  
hound ;

Come, we will slay him and will have his  
horse

And armour, and his damsel shall be  
ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and  
said :

'I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff talk ;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or  
shame.'

Then she went back some paces of  
return,

Met his full frown timidly firm, and said :  
'My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
rock

Waiting to fall on you, and heard them  
boast

That they would slay you, and possess  
your horse

And armour, and your damsel should be  
theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer : 'Did I  
wish

Your warning or your silence? one com-  
mand

I laid upon you, not to speak to me,

And thus ye keep it ! Well then, look  
—for now,

Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit  
three.

And at the midmost charging, Prince  
Geraint

Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his  
breast

And out beyond ; and then against his  
brace

Of comrades, each of whom had broken  
on him

A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd  
the twain

Or slew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying  
him,

Stript from the three dead wolves of  
woman born

The three gay suits of armour which they  
wore,

And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them  
on

Before you'; and she drove them thro'  
the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to  
work

Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience

Driving them on : he fain had spoken to  
her,

And loosed in words of sudden fire the  
wrath

And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all  
within ;

But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her  
dead,

Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own  
bright face

Accuse her of the least immodesty :  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth  
the more

That she *could* speak whom his own ear  
had heard

Call herself false : and suffering thus he  
made

Minutes an age : but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly  
arm'd,

Whereof one seem'd far larger than her  
lord,

And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look, a  
prize !

Three horses and three goodly suits of  
arms,

And all in charge of whom ? a girl : set on.'

'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes a  
knight.'

The third, 'A craven ; how he hangs his  
head.'

The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea, but one?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon  
him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and  
said,

'I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villainy.  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares.  
I needs must disobey him for his good ;  
How should I dare obey him to his harm ?  
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me  
for it,

I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said to  
him

With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to  
speak ?'

He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and she  
spoke.

'There lurk three villains yonder in the  
wood,

And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one  
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say  
That they will fall upon you while ye  
pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful answer  
back :

'And if there were an hundred in the  
wood,

And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only  
breathe

Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a  
breath.

And he, she dreaded most, bare down  
upon him.

Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ; but  
Geraint's,

A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet  
home,

And then brake short, and down his  
enemy roll'd,

And there lay still ; as he that tells the  
tale

Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
That had a sapling growing on it, slide  
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls  
to the beach,

And there lie still, and yet the sapling  
grew :

So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
Of comrades making slower at the  
Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark fallen,  
stood ;

On whom the victor, to confound them  
more,

Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ; for as  
one,

That listens near a torrent mountain-  
brook,

All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
At distance, were the soldiers wont to  
hear

His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
And foemen scared, like that false pair  
who turn'd

Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
Themselves had wrought on many an  
innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd  
the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew from  
those dead wolves

Their three gay suits of armour, each from  
each,  
And bound them on their horses, each on  
each,

And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
Before you,' and she drove them thro' the  
wood.

He follow'd nearer still : the pain she  
had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the  
wood,

Two sets of three laden with jingling  
arms,  
Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her  
heart :

And they themselves, like creatures gently  
born

But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light  
ears, and felt

Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood  
they past,

And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike  
chased

In the brown wild, and mowers mowing  
in it :

And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in  
his hand

Bare victual for the mowers : and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale :  
Then, moving downward to the meadow  
ground,

He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by  
him, said,

'Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so  
faint.'

'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth ; 'and  
thou,

My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers' ; then set  
down

His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate them-  
selves.

And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure ; but  
Geraint

Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was  
amazed ;

And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,  
but take

A horse and arms for guerdon ; choose  
the best.'

He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'

'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried the  
Prince.

'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,  
'Not guerdon ; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return,  
and fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our  
Earl ;

For these are his, and all the field is his,  
And I myself am his ; and I will tell  
him

How great a man thou art : he loves to  
know

When men of mark are in his territory :  
And he will have thee to his palace here,  
And serve thee costlier than with mowers'  
fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no better  
fare :

I never ate with angrier appetite

Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.

I know, God knows, too much of  
palaces !

And if he want me, let him come to me.  
But hire us some fair chamber for the  
night,

And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us  
know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad  
youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought himself  
a knight,

And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left  
alone.

But when the Prince had brought his  
errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let  
them glance

At Enid, where she droopt: his own  
false doom,

That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
sigh'd ;

Then with another humorous ruth re-  
mark'd

The lusty mowers labouring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning  
scythe,

And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,  
And all the windy clamour of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the  
grass

There growing longest by the meadow's  
edge,

And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage  
ring,

Wove and unweave it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they  
went ;

Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,  
Call for the woman of the house,' to which  
She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord' ; the  
two remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and  
mute

As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of  
birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
glance

The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the  
street,

And heel against the pavement echoing,  
burst

Their drowse ; and either started while  
the door,

Push'd from without, drave backward to  
the wall,

And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,  
Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt  
hand,

Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly  
cheer

To feed the sudden guest, and sump-  
tuously

According to his fashion, bad the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honour of their  
Earl ;

'And care not for the cost ; the cost is  
mine.'

And wine and food were brought, and  
Earl Limours

Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd  
upon it,

And made it of two colours ; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled  
him,

Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets ; thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.



Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd  
Limours,

'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room,  
and speak

To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,'  
he said;

'Get her to speak : she doth not speak to  
me.'

Then rose Limours, and looking at his  
feet,

Like him who tries the bridge he fears  
may fail,

Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisper-  
ingly :

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
Enid, my early and my only love,  
Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me  
wild—

What chance is this? how is it I see you  
here?

Ye are in my power at last, are in my  
power.

Yet fear me not : I call mine own self  
wild,

But keep a touch of sweet civility  
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
I thought, but that your father came  
between,

In former days you saw me favourably.  
And if it were so do not keep it back :  
Make me a little happier : let me know it :  
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost ?  
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you  
are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,  
Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
You come with no attendance, page or  
maid,

To serve you—doth he love you as of old ?  
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
Tho' men may bicker with the things they  
love,

They would not make them laughable in  
all eyes,

Not while they loved them ; and your  
wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks

Your story, that this man loves you no  
more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now :  
A common chance—right well I know it  
—pall'd—

For I know men : nor will ye win him  
back,

For the man's love once gone never  
returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old ;  
With more exceeding passion than of old :  
Good, speak the word : my followers ring  
him round :

He sits unarm'd ; I hold a finger up ;  
They understand : nay ; I do not mean  
blood :

Nor need ye look so scared at what I say :  
My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall : there is the  
keep ;

He shall not cross us more ; speak but  
the word :

Or speak it not ; but then by Him that  
made me

The one true lover whom you ever own'd,  
I will make use of all the power I have.  
O pardon me ! the madness of that hour,  
When first I parted from thee, moves me  
yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own  
voice

And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist ; but Enid fear'd his  
eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from the  
feast ;

And answer'd with such craft as women  
use,

Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and  
said :

'Earl, if you love me as in former  
years,

And do not practise on me, come with  
morn,

And snatch me from him as by violence ;  
Leave me to-night : I am weary to the  
death.'

Lowat leave-taking, with his brandish'd  
plume  
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-  
amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bad him a loud  
good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
Debating his command of silence given,  
And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while  
she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly  
pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and equally.  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,  
heap'd

The pieces of his armour in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need ;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoil'd  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and  
then

Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
And strongly striking out her limbs  
awoke ;

Then thought she heard the wild Earl at  
the door,

With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning  
her ;

Which was the red cock shouting to the  
light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy  
world,

And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares : jangling, the  
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at her.  
Then breaking his command of silence  
given,

She told him all that Earl Limours had  
said,

Except the passage that he loved her not ;

Nor left untold the craft herself had used ;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and  
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought 'was it for him she  
wept

In Devon ?' he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good  
fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him  
bring

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the  
house,

And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and  
return'd :

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all  
unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire ;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and  
cried,

'Thy reckoning, friend ?' and ere he  
learnt it, 'Take

Five horses and their armours' ; and the  
host

Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth  
of one !'

'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the  
Prince,

And then to Enid, 'Forward ! and to-  
day

I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that ye speak not but  
obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord,  
I know

Your wish, and would obey ; but riding  
first,

I hear the violent threats you do not  
hear,

I see the danger which you cannot see :  
Then not to give you warning, that seems  
hard ;

Almost beyond me : yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it: be not too wise;

Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
Not all mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,

With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's toil;  
And that within her, which a wanton fool,  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,

Went Enid with her sullen follower on.  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride

More near by many a rood than yestern-morn,

It wellnigh made her cheerful; till Geraint

Waving an angry hand as who should say

'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart again.

But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof

Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw

Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.

And in the moment after, wild Limours,

Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud

Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,

Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore

Down by the length of lance and arm beyond

The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,

And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,

But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower;  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,  
And left him lying in the public way;  
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,

Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,  
Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and man,' he said,

'All of one mind and all right-honest friends!

Not a hoof left: and I methinks till now  
Was honest—paid with horses and with arms;

I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:  
And so what say ye, shall we strip him there

Your lover? has your palfrey heart enough  
To bear his armour? shall we fast, or dine?

No?—then do thou, being right honest, pray

That we may meet the horsemen of Earl Doorm,

I too would still be honest.' Thus he said :

And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
And answering not one word, she led the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,  
But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
So pains him that he sickens nigh to death ;

Sofared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
In combat with the follower of Limours,  
Bled underneath his armour secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
wagg'd ;

And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
The Prince, without a word, from his  
horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his  
arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
Had bared her forehead to the blistering  
sun,

And swathed the hurt that drain'd her  
dear lord's life.

Then after all was done that hand could do,  
She rested, and her desolation came  
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
Was cared as much for as a summer shower :  
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him :  
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl ;  
Half whistling and half singing a coarse  
song,

He drove the dust against her veilles eyes :  
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made

The long way smoke beneath him in his  
fear ;

At which her palfrey whinnying lifted  
heel,

And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
While the great charger stood, grieved  
like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl  
Doorm,

Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet  
beard,

Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances up ;  
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
Cried out with a big voice, ' What, is he  
dead ? '

' No, no, not dead ! ' she answer'd in all  
haste.

' Would some of your kind people take  
him up,

And bear him hence out of this cruel sun ?  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead. '

Then said Earl Doorm : ' Well, if he  
be not dead,

Why wail ye for him thus ? ye seem a child.  
And be he dead, I count you for a fool ;  
Your wailing will not quicken him : dead  
or not,

Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
Yet, since the face *is* comely—some of you,  
Here, take him up, and bear him to our  
hall :

As if he live, we will have him of our  
band ;

And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one. '

He spake, and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who  
advanced,

Each growling like a dog, when his good  
bone

Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling : so the ruffians  
growl'd,

Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,

Their chance of booty from the morning's  
raid,

Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out  
For those that might be wounded; laid  
him on it

All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,  
(His gentle charger following him unled)  
And cast him and the bier in which he  
lay

Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as  
before,

And cursing their lost time, and the dead  
man,

And their own Earl, and their own souls,  
and her.

They might as well have blest her: she  
was deaf

To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his  
head,

And chafing his pale hands, and calling  
to him.

Till at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping  
his head,

And chafing his faint hands, and calling  
to him;

And felt the warm tears falling on his face;  
And said to his own heart, 'She weeps  
for me':

And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as  
dead,

That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps  
for me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to  
the hall.

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with  
noise:

Each hurling down a heap of things that  
rang

Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,

And doff'd his helm: and then there  
flutter'd in,

Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen: and  
Earl Doorm

Struck with a knife's haft hard against  
the board,

And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his  
spears.

And men brought in whole hogs and  
quarter beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam of  
flesh:

And none spake word, but all sat down  
at once,

And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear them  
feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.  
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he  
would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and  
found

A damsel drooping in a corner of it.

Then he remember'd her, and how she  
wept;

And out of her there came a power upon  
him;

And rising on the sudden he said, 'Eat!  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see you  
weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had  
your good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep  
for me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

And so there lived some colour in your  
cheek,

There is not one among my gentlewomen  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.

But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
And I will do the thing I have not done,

For ye shall share my earldom with me,  
girl,

And we will live like two birds in one  
nest,

And I will fetch you forage from all  
fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke: the brawny spearman let  
his cheek  
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and  
turning stared;  
While some, whose souls the old serpent  
long had drawn  
Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd  
leaf

And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's  
ear

What shall not be recorded—women they,  
Women, or what had been those gracious  
things,

But now desired the humbling of their  
best,

Yea, would have help'd him to it: and  
all at once

They hated her, who took no thought of  
them,

But answer'd in low voice, her meek head  
yet

Drooping, 'I pray you of your courtesy,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard her  
speak,

But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so graci-  
ously,

Assumed that she had thank'd him, add-  
ing, 'Yea,

Eat and be glad, for I account you mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should I  
be glad

Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her  
talk,

As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized on  
her,

And bare her by main violence to the  
board,

And thrust the dish before her, crying,  
'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, vext, 'I will not  
eat

Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he  
answer'd. 'Here!'

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held it  
to her,)

'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with fight,  
or hot,

God's curse, with anger—often I myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce can  
eat:

Drink therefore and the wine will change  
your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I  
will not drink

Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no  
more,

I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced his  
hall,

Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper  
lip,

And coming up close to her, said at last:  
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,

Take warning: yonder man is surely  
dead;

And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wait  
for one,

Who put your beauty to this flout and  
scorn

By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus: cross me no  
more.

At least put off to please me this poor  
gown,

This silken rag, this beggar-woman's  
weed:

I love that beauty should go beautifully:  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one  
Who loves that beauty should go beauti-  
fully?

Rise therefore; robe yourself in this:  
obey.'



He spoke, and one among his gentle-  
women  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the  
front  
With jewels than the sward with drops of  
dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the  
hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung : so thickly shone  
the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come ; and Enid  
said :

'In this poor gown my dear lord found  
me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's hall :  
In this poor gown I rode with him to  
court,  
And there the Queen array'd me like the  
sun :  
In this poor gown he bad me clothe  
myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
Of honour, where no honour can be  
gain'd :  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough :  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be :  
I never loved, can never love but him :  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

Then strode the brute Earl up and  
down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his  
teeth ;  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his  
mood  
Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with  
you ;  
Takemysalute,'unknightly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, 'He had not  
dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the  
wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at  
his sword,  
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a  
sweep of it  
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a  
ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the  
floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted  
dead.  
And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise,  
and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said :

'Enid, I have used you worse than  
that dead man ;  
Done you more wrong : we both have  
undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice  
your own :  
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you  
yesternorn—  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard  
you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true  
wife :  
I swear I will not ask your meaning in  
it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than  
doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender  
word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :  
She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will  
return

And slay you ; fly, your charger is with-  
out,  
My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you  
ride

Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.'  
And moving out they found the stately  
horse,

Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came,  
and stoop'd

With a low whinny toward the pair : and  
she

Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the horse  
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his  
foot

She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd  
his face

And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast  
her arms

About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous  
hour

Put hand to hand beneath her husband's  
heart,

And felt him hers again : she did not  
weep,

But o'er her meek eyes came a happy  
mist

Like that which kept the heart of Eden  
green

Before the useful trouble of the rain :

Yet not so misty were her meek blue  
eyes

As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his  
lance

In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of  
blood,

She, with her mind all full of what had  
chanced,

Shriek'd to the stranger 'Slay not a dead  
man !'

'The voice of Enid,' said the knight ;  
but she,

Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
Was moved so much the more, and  
shriek'd again,

'O cousin, slay not him who gave you  
life.'

And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake :  
'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all  
love ;

I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm ;  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon  
him,

Who love you, Prince, with something  
of the love

Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
chastens us.

For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to  
Hell,

By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table  
Round,

And since I knew this Earl, when I my-  
self

Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,

I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
Doorm

(The King is close behind me) bidding  
him

Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
King.'

'He hears the judgment of the King  
of kings,'

Cried the wan Prince ; 'and lo, the  
powers of Doorm

Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddled here and there on mound  
and knoll,

Were men and women staring and aghast,  
While some yet fled ; and then he plainlier  
told

How the huge Earl lay slain within his  
hall.

But when the knight besought him,  
'Follow me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's  
own ear

Speak what has chanced ; ye surely have  
endured

Strange chances here alone ' ; that other  
flush'd,

And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
King,

And after madness acted question ask'd :  
Till Edyrn crying, ' If ye will not go  
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,'  
' Enough,' he said, ' I follow,' and they  
went.

But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
And one from Edyrn. Every now and  
then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men  
may fear

Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said :

' Fair and dear cousin, you that most  
had cause

To fear me, have no longer, I am changed.  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to  
make

My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood  
Break into furious flame ; being repulsed  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and  
wrought

Until I overturn'd him ; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)  
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour ;  
Did her mock-honour as the fairest fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride, that I believed myself  
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad :  
And, but for my main purpose in these  
jousts,

I should have slain your father, seized  
yourself.

I lived in hope that sometime you would  
come

To these my lists with him whom best  
you loved ;

And there, poor cousin, with your meek  
blue eyes,

The truest eyes that ever answer'd Heaven,  
Behold me overturn and trample on him.

Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd  
to me,

I should not less have kill'd him. And  
you came,—

But once you came,—and with your own  
true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow  
My proud self, and my purpose three  
years old,

And set his foot upon me, and give me  
life.

There was I broken down ; there was I  
saved :

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating  
the life

He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid upon  
me

Was but to rest awhile within her court ;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,  
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known,  
I found,

Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's in-  
deed :

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
saint,

Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man.

And you were often there about the Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw ;  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was changed ;  
And fear not, cousin ; I am changed  
indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or  
foe,

There most in those who most have done  
them ill.

And when they reach'd the camp the  
 King himself  
 Advanced to greet them, and beholding  
 her  
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a  
 word,  
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held  
 In converse for a little, and return'd,  
 And, gravely smiling, lifted her from  
 horse,  
 And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-  
 like,  
 And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and  
 said :

' Prince, when of late ye pray'd me for  
 my leave  
 To move to your own land, and there  
 defend  
 Your marches, I was prick'd with some  
 reproof,  
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate and  
 be,  
 By having look'd too much thro' alien  
 eyes,  
 And wrought too long with delegated  
 hands,  
 Not used mine own : but now behold me  
 come  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all my  
 realm,  
 With Edyrn and with others : have ye  
 look'd  
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly  
 changed?  
 This work of his is great and wonderful.  
 His very face with change of heart is  
 changed.  
 The world will not believe a man repents :  
 And this wise world of ours is mainly  
 right.  
 Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
 quitch  
 Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
 And make all clean, and plant himself  
 afresh.  
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart

As I will weed this land before I go.  
 I, therefore, made him of our Table  
 Round,  
 Not rashly, but have proved him every-  
 way  
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
 Sanest and most obedient : and indeed  
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself  
 After a life of violence, seems to me  
 A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
 Than if some knight of mine, risking his  
 life,  
 My subject with my subjects under him,  
 Should make an onslaught single on a  
 realm  
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
 And were himself nigh wounded to the  
 death.'

So spake the King ; low bow'd the  
 Prince, and felt  
 His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
 And past to Enid's tent ; and thither came  
 The King's own leech to look into his  
 hurt ;  
 And Enid tended on him there ; and there  
 Her constant motion round him, and the  
 breath  
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
 With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
 As the south-west that blowing Bala lake  
 Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his  
 hurt,  
 The blameless King went forth and cast  
 his eyes  
 On each of all whom Uther left in charge  
 Long since, to guard the justice of the  
 King :  
 He look'd and found them wanting ; and  
 as now  
 Men weed the white horse on the Berk-  
 shire hills  
 To keep him bright and clean as hereto-  
 fore,  
 He rooted out the slothful officer  
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at  
 wrong,

And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men

To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed  
the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again,  
they past

With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,

And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
And tho' Geraint could never take again  
That comfort from their converse which  
he took

Before the Queen's fair name was breathed  
upon,

He rested well content that all was well.  
Thenceafter tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the  
shores

Of Severn, and they past to their own  
land.

And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great Prince and man  
of men.

But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose  
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
Of times to be ; nor did he doubt her more,  
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

## BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAM the King, who held and lost with  
Lot

In that first war, and had his realm restored  
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late

To send his tribute ; wherefore Arthur  
call'd

His treasurer, one of many years, and  
spake,

'Go thou with him and him and bring it  
to us,

Lest we should set one truer on his throne.  
Man's word is God in man.'

His Baron said

'We go but harken : there be two strange  
knights

Who sit near Camelot at a fountain-side,  
A mile beneath the forest, challenging  
And overthrowing every knight who  
comes.

Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,  
And send them to thee ?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him.

'Old friend, too old to be so young,  
depart,

Delay not thou for ought, but let them  
sit,

Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

So these departed. Early, one fair  
dawn,

The light-wing'd spirit of his youth  
return'd

On Arthur's heart ; he arm'd himself and  
went,

So coming to the fountain-side beheld  
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,  
Brethren, to right and left the spring, that  
down,

From underneath a plume of lady-fern,  
Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom  
of it.

And on the right of Balin Balin's horse  
Was fast beside an alder, on the left  
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.

'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit  
ye here ?'

Balin and Balan answer'd 'For the sake  
Of glory ; we be mightier men than all  
In Arthur's court ; that also have we  
proved ;

For whatsoever knight against us came  
Or I or he have easily overthrown.'

'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's  
hall,

But rather proven in his Paynim wars  
 Than famous jousts ; but see, or proven  
     or not,  
 Whether me likewise ye can overthrow.'  
 And Arthur lightly smote the brethren  
     down,  
 And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside  
 The carolling water set themselves again,  
 And spake no word until the shadow  
     turn'd ;  
 When from the fringe of coppice round  
     them burst

A spangled pursuivant, and crying 'Sirs,  
 Rise, follow ! ye be sent for by the  
     King,'  
 They follow'd ; whom when Arthur seeing  
     ask'd

'Tell me your names ; why sat ye by the  
     well ?'

Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
 Saying 'An unmelodious name to thee,  
 Balin, "the Savage"—that addition  
     thine—

My brother and my better, this man here,  
 Balan. I smote upon the naked skull  
 A thrall of thine in open hall, my hand  
 Was gauntleted, half slew him ; for I  
     heard

He had spoken evil of me ; thy just wrath  
 Sent me a three-years' exile from thine  
     eyes.

I have not lived my life delightfully :  
 For I that did that violence to thy thrall,  
 Had often wrought some fury on myself,  
 Saving for Balan : those three kingless  
     years

Have past—were wormwood-bitter to me.  
     King,

Methought that if we sat beside the well,  
 And hurl'd to ground what knight soever  
     spurr'd

Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier  
     back,

And make, as ten-times worthier to be  
     thine

Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I  
     have said.

Not so—not all. A man of thine to-day

Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.  
     Thy will ?'

Said Arthur 'Thou hast ever spoken truth ;  
 Thy too fierce manhood would not let  
     thee lie.

Rise, my true knight. As children learn,  
     be thou

Wiser for falling ! walk with me, and  
     move

To music with thine Order and the King.  
 Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,  
     stands

Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again !'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,  
 The Lost one Found was greeted as in  
     Heaven

With joy that blazed itself in woodland  
     wealth

Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,  
 Along the walls and down the board ;  
     they sat,

And cup clash'd cup ; they drank and  
     some one sang,

Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, where-  
     upon

Their common shout in chorus, mount-  
     ing, made

Those banners of twelve battles overhead  
 Stir, as they stir'd of old, when Arthur's  
     host

Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day was  
     won.

Then Balan added to their Order lived  
 A wealthier life than heretofore with these  
 And Balin, till their embassy return'd.

'Sir King' they brought report 'we  
     hardly found,

So bush'd about it is with gloom, the hall  
 Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once  
 A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd  
 Horse against horse ; but seeing that thy  
     realm

Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ, the  
     King

Took, as in rival heat, to holy things ;  
 And finds himself descended from the  
     Saint



Arimathæan Joseph ; him who first  
 Brought the great faith to Britain over  
   seas ;  
 He boasts his life as purer than thine  
   own ;  
 Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse abeat ;  
 Hath push'd aside his faithful wife, nor  
   lets  
 Or dame or damsel enter at his gates  
 Lest he should be polluted. This gray  
   King  
 Show'd us a shrine wherein were wonders  
   —yea—  
 Rich arks with priceless bones of martyr-  
   dom,  
 Thorns of the crown and shivers of the  
   cross,  
 And therewithal (for thus he told us)  
   brought  
 By holy Joseph hither, that same spear  
 Wherewith the Roman pierced the side  
   of Christ.  
 He much amazed us ; after, when we  
   sought  
 The tribute, answer'd " I have quite fore-  
   gone  
 All matters of this world : Garlon, mine  
   heir,  
 Of him demand it," which this Garlon gave  
 With much ado, railing at thine and thee.

‘ But when we left, in those deep woods  
   we found  
 A knight of thine spear-stricken from  
   behind,  
 Dead, whom we buried ; more than one  
   of us  
 Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman  
   there  
 Reported of some demon in the woods  
 Was once a man, who driven by evil  
   tongues  
 From all his fellows, lived alone, and came  
 To learn black magic, and to hate his  
   kind  
 With such a hate, that when he died, his  
   soul  
 Became a Fiend, which, as the man in life  
 Was wounded by blind tongues he saw  
   not whence,

Strikes from behind. This woodman  
   show'd the cave  
 From which he sallies, and wherein he  
   dwelt.  
 We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no  
   more.’

Then Arthur, ‘ Let who goes before  
   me, see  
 He do not fall behind me : foully slain  
 And villainously ! who will hunt for me  
 This demon of the woods ? ’ Said Balan,  
   ‘ I ! ’  
 So claim'd the quest and rode away, but  
   first,  
 Embracing Balin, ‘ Good my brother,  
   hear !  
 Let not thy moods prevail, when I am  
   gone  
 Who used to lay them ! hold them outer  
   fiends,  
 Who leap at thee to tear thee ; shake  
   them aside,  
 Dreams ruling when wit sleeps ! yea, but  
   to dream  
 That any of these would wrong thee,  
   wrongs thyself.  
 Witness their flowery welcome. Bound  
   are they  
 To speak no evil. Truly save for fears,  
 My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship  
 Would make me wholly blest : thou one  
   of them,  
 Be one indeed : consider them, and all  
 Their bearing in their common bond of  
   love,  
 No more of hatred than in Heaven itself,  
 No more of jealousy than in Paradise.’

So Balan warn'd, and went ; Balin  
   remain'd :  
 Who—for but three brief moons had  
   glanced away  
 From being knighted till he smote the  
   thrall,  
 And faded from the presence into years  
 Of exile—now would strictlier set himself  
 To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,  
 Manhood, and knighthood ; wherefore  
   hover'd round

Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high  
sweet smile

In passing, and a transitory word  
Make knight or churl or child or damsel  
seem

From being smiled at happier in them-  
selves—

Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a  
height,

That glooms his valley, sighs to see the  
peak

Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the  
northern star ;

For one from out his village lately  
climb'd

And brought report of azure lands and  
fair,

Far seen to left and right ; and he him-  
self

Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred  
feet

Up from the base : so Balin marvelling  
oft

How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to  
move,

Groan'd, and at times would mutter,  
' These be gifts,

Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,  
Beyond *my* reach. Well had I foughten  
—well—

In those fierce wars, struck hard—and  
had I crown'd

With my slain self the heaps of whom I  
slew—

So—better !—But this worship of the  
Queen,

That honour too wherein she holds him  
—this,

This was the sunshine that hath given the  
man

A growth, a name that branches o'er the  
rest,

And strength against all odds, and what  
the King

So prizes—overprizes—gentleness.

Her likewise would I worship an I might.  
I never can be close with her, as he

That brought her hither. Shall I pray  
the King

To let me bear some token of his Queen

Whereon to gaze, remembering her—  
forget

My heats and violences ? live afresh ?

What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant it ?  
nay

Being so stately-gentle, would she make  
My darkness blackness ? and with how  
sweet grace

She greeted my return ! Bold will I  
be—

Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,  
In lieu of this rough beast upon my  
shield,

Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning  
savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought  
him, said

' What wilt thou bear ? ' Balin was bold,  
and ask'd

To bear her own crown-royal upon shield,  
Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to the  
King,

Who answer'd ' Thou shalt put the crown  
to use.

The crown is but the shadow of the King,  
And this a shadow's shadow, let him  
have it,

So this will help him of his violences ! '

' No shadow ' said Sir Balin ' O my  
Queen,

But light to me ! no shadow, O my King,  
But golden earnest of a gentler life ! '

So Balin bare the crown, and all the  
knights

Approved him, and the Queen, and all  
the world

Made music, and he felt his being move  
In music with his Order, and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in middle  
May,

Hath ever and anon a note so thin

It seems another voice in other groves ;

Thus, after some quick burst of sudden  
wrath,

The music in him seem'd to change, and  
grow

Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall  
His passion half had gauntleted to death,  
That causer of his banishment and shame,  
Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously :

His arm half rose to strike again, but fell :

The memory of that cognizance on shield  
Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd :

'Too high this mount of Camelot for me :

These high-set courtesies are not for me.  
Shall I not rather prove the worse for these ?

Fierier and stormier from restraining,  
break

Into some madness ev'n before the Queen ?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,

And glancing on the window, when the gloom

Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame

That rages in the woodland far below,  
So when his moods were darken'd, court and King

And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall

Shadow'd an angry distance : yet he strove

To learn the graces of their Table, fought  
Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat

Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.

A walk of roses ran from door to door ;  
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower :

And down that range of roses the great Queen

Came with slow steps, the morning on her face ;

And all in shadow from the counter door  
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,

As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced

The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.

Follow'd the Queen ; Sir Balin heard her 'Prince,

Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,  
As pass without good morrow to thy Queen ?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,

'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'

'Yea so' she said 'but so to pass me by—

So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.  
Let be : ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers

'Yea—for a dream. Last night methought I saw

That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand

In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,

And all the light upon her silver face  
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.

Lo ! these her emblems drew mine eyes—away :

For see, how perfect-pure ! As light a flush

As hardly tints the blossom of the quince  
Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood.'

'Sweeter to me' she said 'this garden rose

Deep-hued and many-folded ! sweeter still

The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May.

Prince, we have ridd'n before among the flowers

In those fair days—not all as cool as these,

Thou' season-earlier. Art thou sad ? or sick ?

Our noble King will send thee his own  
leech—  
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes;  
they dwelt  
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall:  
her hue  
Changed at his gaze: so turning side by  
side  
They past, and Balin started from his  
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not what  
I see.  
Damsel and lover? hear not what I  
hear.  
My father hath begotten me in his wrath.  
I suffer from the things before me, know,  
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be  
knight;  
A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom on  
gloom  
Deepen'd: he sharply caught his lance  
and shield,  
Nor stay'd to crave permission of the  
King,  
But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd  
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balan,  
saw  
The fountain where they sat together,  
sigh'd  
'Was I not better there with him?' and  
rode  
The skyless woods, but under open blue  
Came on the hoarhead woodman at a  
bough  
Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!'  
he cried,  
Descended, and disjointed it at a blow:  
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-  
ingly  
'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of  
these woods  
If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin  
cried  
'Him, or the viler devil who plays his  
part,

To lay that devil would lay the Devil in  
me.'

'Nay' said the churl, 'our devil is a  
truth,

I saw the flash of him but yestereven.  
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too  
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride  
unseen.

Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd  
him

'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl,  
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving  
him,

Now with slack rein and careless of him-  
self,

Now with dug spur and raving at him-  
self,

Now with droopt brow down the long  
glades he rode;

So mark'd not on his right a cavern-chasm  
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far  
within,

The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd  
on rocks

Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from  
the floor,

Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of  
night

Whereout the Demon issued up from  
Hell.

He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf  
to all

Save that chain'd rage, which ever yelp'd  
within,

Past eastward from the falling sun. At  
once

He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud  
And tremble, and then the shadow of a  
spear,

Shot from behind him, ran along the  
ground.

Sideways he started from the path, and  
saw,

With pointed lance as if to pierce, a  
shape,

A light of armour by him flash, and  
pass

And vanish in the woods; and follow'd  
this,

But all so blind in rage that unawares

He burst his lance against a forest bough,  
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and  
fled

Far, till the castle of a King, the hall  
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped  
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built  
but strong ;

The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,  
The battlement overtopped with ivytods,  
A home of bats, in every tower an owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam crying  
'Lord,

Why wear ye this crown-royal upon  
shield ?'

Said Balin 'For the fairest and the best  
Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'  
So stall'd his horse, and strode across the  
court,

But found the greetings both of knight  
and King

Faint in the low dark hall of banquet :  
leaves

Laid their green faces flat against the  
panes,

Sprays grated, and the canker'd boughs  
without

Whined in the wood ; for all was hush'd  
within,

Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise  
ask'd

'Why wear ye that crown-royal ?' Balin  
said

'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,  
and all,

As fairest, best and purest, granted me  
To bear it !' Such a sound (for Arthur's  
knights

Were hated strangers in the hall) as  
makes

The white swan-mother, sitting, when she  
hears

A strange knee rustle thro' her secret  
reeds,

Made Garlon, hissing ; then he sourly  
smiled.

'Fairest I grant her : I have seen ; but  
best,

Best, purest ? *thou* from Arthur's hall,  
and yet

So simple ! hast thou eyes, or if, are these  
So far besotted that they fail to see  
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret  
shame ?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin, boss'd  
With holy Joseph's legend, on his right  
Stood, all of massiest bronze : one side  
had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing on  
it :

And one was rough with wattling, and  
the walls

Of that low church he built at Glaston-  
bury.

This Balin graspt, but while in act to  
hurl,

Thro' memory of that token on the  
shield

Relax'd his hold : 'I will be gentle' he  
thought

'And passing gentle' caught his hand  
away

Then fiercely to Sir Garlon 'Eyes have I  
That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,  
Shot from behind me, run along the  
ground ;

Eyes too that long have watch'd how  
Lancelot draws

From homage to the best and purest,  
might,

Name, manhood, and a grace, but scanty  
thine,

Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst  
endure

To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy  
guest,

Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk !  
Let be ! no more !'

But not the less by night

The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his  
rest,

Stung him in dreams. At length, and  
dim thro' leaves

Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,  
and old boughs

Whined in the wood. He rose, de-  
scended, met

The scorner in the castle court, and fain,  
 For hate and loathing, would have past  
 him by ;  
 But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-  
 wise ;  
 'What, wear ye still that same crown-  
 scandalous ?'  
 His countenance blacken'd, and his  
 forehead veins  
 Bloated, and branch'd ; and tearing out  
 of sheath  
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha !  
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee  
 ghost,'  
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the  
 blade flew  
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the  
 stones.  
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward,  
 fell,  
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm  
 Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the  
 castle a cry  
 Sounded across the court, and—men-at-  
 arms,  
 A score with pointed lances, making at  
 him—  
 He dash'd the pummel at the foremost  
 face,  
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made his  
 feet  
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he  
 mark'd  
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide  
 And inward to the wall ; he stept behind ;  
 Thence in a moment heard them pass  
 like wolves—  
 Howling ; but while he stared about the  
 shrine,  
 In which he scarce could spy the Christ  
 for Saints,  
 Beheld before a golden altar lie  
 The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,  
 Point-painted red ; and seizing thereupon  
 Push'd thro' an open casement down,  
 lean'd on it,  
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth ;  
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from  
 what side  
 The blindfold rummage buried in the walls

Might echo, ran the counter path, and  
 found  
 His charger, mounted on him and away.  
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to  
 the left,  
 One overhead ; and Pellam's feeble cry  
 'Stay, stay him ! he defileth heavenly  
 things  
 With earthly uses'—made him quickly  
 dive  
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many  
 a mile  
 Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,  
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,  
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to  
 ground.

Half-wroth he had not ended, but all  
 glad,  
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet un-  
 lamed,  
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,  
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and  
 thought  
 'I have shamed thee so that now thou  
 shamest me,  
 Thee will I bear no more,' high on a  
 branch  
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,  
 And there in gloom cast himself all  
 along,  
 Moaning 'My violences, my violences !'

But now the wholesome music of the  
 wood  
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of  
 Mark  
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode  
 The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her  
 Squire.

'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the barren  
 cold,  
 And kindled all the plain and all the  
 wold.  
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old.  
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
 Hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in  
 your quire—



Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's  
 desire,  
 Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire !  
 The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
 Hell.

‘The fire of Heaven is on the dusty  
 ways.

The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.  
 The whole wood-world is one full peal  
 of praise.

• The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
 Hell.

‘The fire of Heaven is lord of all things  
 good,

And starve not thou this fire within thy  
 blood,

But follow Vivien thro’ the fiery flood !

The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
 Hell !’

Then turning to her Squire ‘This fire  
 of Heaven,

This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,  
 And beat the cross to earth, and break  
 the King

And all his Table.’

Then they reach’d a glade,

Where under one long lane of cloudless  
 air

Before another wood, the royal crown  
 Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm  
 Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and her  
 Squire ;

Amazed were these ; ‘Lo there’ she  
 cried—‘a crown—

Borne by some high lord-prince of  
 Arthur’s hall,

And there a horse ! the rider ? where is  
 he ?

See, yonder lies one dead within the  
 wood.

Not dead ; he stirs !—but sleeping. I  
 will speak.

Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet  
 rest,

Not, doubtless, all unearn’d by noble  
 deeds.

But bounden art thou, if from Arthur’s  
 hall,

To help the weak. Behold, I fly from  
 shame,

A lustful King, who sought to win my  
 love

Thro’ evil ways : the knight, with whom  
 I rode,

Hath suffer’d misadventure, and my  
 squire

Hath in him small defence ; but thou,  
 Sir Prince,

Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,  
 Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,  
 To get me shelter for my maidenhood.

I charge thee by that crown upon thy  
 shield,

And by the great Queen’s name, arise  
 and hence.’

And Balin rose, ‘Thither no more !  
 nor Prince

Nor knight am I, but one that hath  
 defamed

The cognizance she gave me : here I  
 dwell

Savage among the savage woods, here  
 die—

Die : let the wolves’ black maws en-  
 sepulchre

Their brother beast, whose anger was his  
 lord.

O me, that such a name as Guinevere’s,  
 Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted  
 up,

And been thereby uplifted, should thro’  
 me,

My violence, and my villainy, come to  
 shame.’

Thereat she suddenly laugh’d and  
 shrill, anon

Sigh’d all as suddenly. Said Balin to her  
 ‘Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha ?

Hence, for I will not with thee.’ Again  
 she sigh’d

‘Pardon, sweet lord ! we maidens often  
 laugh

When sick at heart, when rather we  
 should weep.

I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy  
rest,  
And now full loth am I to break thy  
dream,  
But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,  
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark me  
well.  
Dost thou remember at Caerleon once—  
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—  
Ay, thou rememberest well—one summer  
dawn—  
By the great tower—Caerleon upon  
Usk—  
Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair  
lord,  
The flower of all their vestal knighthood,  
knelt  
In amorous homage—knelt—what else?  
—O ay  
Knelt, and drew down from out his  
night-black hair  
And mumbled that white hand whose  
ring'd caress  
Had wander'd from her own King's  
golden head,  
And lost itself in darkness, till she  
cried—  
I thought the great tower would crash  
down on both—  
“Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on  
the lips,  
Thou art my King.” This lad, whose  
lightest word  
Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,  
Saw them embrace: he reddens, cannot  
speak,  
So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,  
The deathless mother-maidenhood of  
Heaven,  
Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with  
me!  
Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an  
thou would'st,  
Do these more shame than these have  
done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-stricken  
he,  
Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,  
Breathed in a dismal whisper 'It is truth.'

Sunnily she smiled 'And even in this  
lone wood,  
Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper  
this.  
Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods  
have tongues,  
As walls have ears: but thou shalt go  
with me,  
And we will speak at first exceeding  
low.  
Meet is it the good King be not deceived.  
See now, I set thee high on vantage  
ground,  
From whence to watch the time, and  
eagle-like  
Stoop at thy will 'on Lancelot and the  
Queen.'

She ceased; his evil spirit upon him  
leapt,  
He ground his teeth together, sprang  
with a yell,  
Tore from the branch, and cast on earth,  
the shield,  
Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal  
crown,  
Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it from  
him  
Among the forest weeds, and cursed the  
tale,  
The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,  
Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or  
beast,  
Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan  
lurking there.  
(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard  
and thought  
'The scream of that Wood-devil I came  
to quell!'  
Then nearing 'Lo! he hath slain some  
brother-knight,  
And tramples on the goodly shield to  
show  
His loathing of our Order and the Queen.  
My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil  
or man  
Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin spake  
not word,

But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the  
Squire,  
And vaulted on his horse, and so they  
crash'd  
In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,  
Reputed to be red with sinless blood,  
Redden'd at once with sinful, for the  
point  
Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd  
The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's  
horse  
Was wearied to the death, and, when  
they clash'd,  
Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man  
Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd  
away.

Then to her Squire mutter'd the  
damsel 'Fools!  
This fellow hath wrought some foulness  
with his Queen:  
Else never had he borne her crown, nor  
raved  
And thus foam'd over at a rival name:  
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast  
broken shell,  
Art yet half-yolk, not even come to  
down—  
Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk—  
And yet hast often pleaded for my love—  
See what I see, be thou where I have  
been,  
Or else Sir Chick—dismount and loose  
their casques  
I fain would know what manner of men  
they be.'  
And when the Squire had loosed them,  
'Goodly!—look!  
They might have cropt the myriad flower  
of May,  
And butt each other here, like brainless  
bulls,  
Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle Squire  
'I hold them happy, so they died for  
love:  
And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your  
dog,  
I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I  
better prize  
The living dog than the dead lion: away!  
I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'  
Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,  
And bounding forward 'Leave them to  
the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the cool-  
ing air,  
Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,  
Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,  
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where  
he lay,  
And on his dying brother cast himself  
Dying; and *he* lifted faint eyes; he felt  
One near him; all at once they found the  
world,  
Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike  
wail,  
And drawing down the dim disastrous  
brow  
That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd  
and spake;

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died  
To save thy life, have brought thee to thy  
death.  
Why had ye not the shield I knew? and  
why  
Trampled ye thus on that which bare the  
Crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly, and in  
gasps,  
All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd  
again.

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's  
hall:  
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded  
not.  
And one said "Eat in peace! a liar is he,  
And hates thee for the tribute!" this  
good knight  
Told me, that twice a wanton damsel  
came,  
And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,  
Whom Pellam drove away with holy  
heat.

I well believe this damsel, and the one  
Who stood beside thee even now, the  
same.

"She dwells among the woods" he said  
"and meets

And dallies with him in the Mouth of  
Hell."

Foul are their lives; foul are their lips;  
they lied.

Pure as our own true Mother is our  
Queen.'

'O brother' answer'd Balin 'woe is  
me!

My madness all thy life has been thy  
doom,

Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day;  
and now

The night has come. I scarce can see  
thee now.

Goodnight! for we shall never bid again  
Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here,  
and dark

It will be there. I see thee now no  
more.

I would not mine again should darken  
thine,

Goodnight, true brother.'

Balin answer'd low  
'Goodnight, true brother here! good-  
morrow there!

We two were born together, and we  
die

Together by one doom': and while he  
spoke

Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept  
the sleep

With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm.

## MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds  
were still,

And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old  
It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter  
grudge

The slights of Arthur and his Table, Mark  
The Cornish King, had heard a wandering  
voice,

A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm  
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say  
That out of naked knightlike purity  
Sir Lancelot worship't no unmarried girl  
But the great Queen herself, fought in her  
name,

Sware by her—vows like theirs, that high  
in heaven

Love most, but neither marry, nor are  
given

In marriage, angels of our Lord's report.

He ceased, and then—for Vivien  
sweetly said

(She sat beside the banquet-nearest Mark),  
'And is the fair example follow'd, Sir,  
In Arthur's household?'—answer'd inno-  
cently:

'Ay, by some few—ay, truly—youths  
that hold

It more becometh the perfect virgin knight  
To worship woman as true wife beyond  
All hopes of gaining, than as maiden girl.  
They place their pride in Lancelot and  
the Queen.

So passionate for an utter purity  
Beyond the limit of their bond, are these,  
For Arthur bound them not to singleness.  
Brave hearts and clean! and yet—God  
guide them—young.'

Then Mark was half in heart to hurl  
his cup  
Straight at the speaker, but forbore: he  
rose

To leave the hall, and, Vivien following  
him,

Turn'd to her: 'Here are snakes within  
the grass;

And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye fear  
The monkish manhood, and the mask of  
pure

Worn by this court, can stir them till they  
sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-  
full  
'Why fear? because that foster'd at *thy*  
court  
I savour of thy—virtues? fear them? no.  
As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out  
fear,  
So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out  
fear.  
My father died in battle against the King,  
My mother on his corpse in open field;  
She bore me there, for born from death  
was I  
Among the dead and sown upon the  
wind—  
And then on thee! and shown the truth  
betimes,  
That old true filth, and bottom of the well,  
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious lessons  
thine  
And maxims of the mud! "This Arthur  
pure!  
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself hath  
made  
Gives him the lie! There is no being  
pure,  
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the  
same?"—  
If I were Arthur, I would have thy blood.  
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring  
thee back,  
When I have ferreted out their burrow-  
ings,  
The hearts of all this Order in mine  
hand—  
Ay—so that fate and craft and folly close,  
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden  
beard.  
To me this narrow grizzled fork of thine  
Is cleaner-fashion'd—Well, I lov'd thee  
first,  
That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.  
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing, lodged  
Low in the city, and on a festal day  
When Guinevere was crossing the great  
hall  
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,  
and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil have  
ye wrought?  
Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise arose  
And stood with folded hands and down-  
ward eyes  
Of glancing corner, and all meekly said,  
'None wrought, but suffer'd much, an  
orphan maid!  
My father died in battle for thy King,  
My mother on his corpse—in open field,  
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-  
nesse—  
Poor wretch—no friend!—and now by  
Mark the King  
For that small charm of feature mine,  
pursued—  
If any such be mine—I fly to thee.  
Save, save me thou—Woman of women—  
thine  
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown of  
power,  
Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's  
own white  
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless  
King—  
Help, for he follows! take me to thyself!  
O yield me shelter for mine innocence  
Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes  
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful, rose  
Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen  
who stood  
All glittering like May sunshine on May  
leaves  
In green and gold, and plumed with green  
replied,  
'Peace, child! of overpraisè and over-  
blame  
We choose the last. Our noble Arthur,  
him  
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear and  
know.  
Nay—we believe all evil of thy Mark—  
Well, we shall test thee farther; but this  
hour  
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.  
He hath given us a fair falcon which he  
train'd;  
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the while.'

She past ; and Vivien murmur'd after  
 'Go !  
 I bide the while.' Then thro' the portal-  
 arch  
 Peering askance, and muttering broken-  
 wise,  
 As one that labours with an evil dream,  
 Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to  
 horse.

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly—ay, but  
 gaunt :  
 Courteous—amends for gauntness—takes  
 her hand—  
 That glance of theirs, but for the street,  
 had been  
 A clinging kiss—how hand lingers in  
 hand !  
 Let go at last !—they ride away—to hawk  
 For waterfowl. Royaller game is mine.  
 For such a supersensual sensual bond  
 As that gray cricket chirpt of at our  
 hearth—  
 Touch flax with flame—a glance will serve  
 —the liars !  
 Ah little rat that borest in the dyke  
 Thy hole by night to let the boundless  
 deep  
 Down—upon far-off cities while they  
 dance—  
 Or dream—of thee they dream'd not—  
 nor of me  
 These—ay, but each of either : ride, and  
 dream  
 The mortal dream that never yet was  
 mine—  
 Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—to  
 me !  
 Then, narrow court and lubber King,  
 farewell !  
 For Lancelot will be gracious to the rat,  
 And our wise Queen, if knowing that I  
 know,  
 Will hate, loathe, fear—but honour me  
 the more.'

Yet while they rode together down the  
 plain,  
 Their talk was all of training, terms of art,  
 Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.

'She is too noble' he said 'to check at  
 pies,  
 Nor will she rake : there is no baseness  
 in her.'  
 Here when the Queen demanded as by  
 chance  
 'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let  
 her be,'  
 Said Lancelot and unhooded casting off  
 The goodly falcon free ; she tower'd ;  
 her bells,  
 Tone under tone, shrill'd ; and they lifted  
 up  
 Their eager faces, wondering at the  
 strength,  
 Boldness and royal knighthood of the bird  
 Who pounced her quarry and slew it.  
 Many a time  
 As once—of old—among the flowers—  
 they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the Queen  
 Among her damsels broidering sat, heard,  
 watch'd  
 And whisper'd : thro' the peaceful court  
 she crept  
 And whisper'd : then as Arthur in the  
 highest  
 Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the  
 lowest,  
 Arriving at a time of golden rest,  
 And sowing one ill hint from ear to ear,  
 While all the heathen lay at Arthur's feet,  
 And no quest came, but all was joust and  
 play,  
 Leaven'd his hall. They heard and let  
 her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has left  
 Death in the living waters, and with-  
 drawn,  
 The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court.

She hated all the knights, and heard in  
 thought  
 Their lavish comment when her name  
 was named.  
 For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
 Vext at a rumour issued from herself  
 Of some corruption crept among his  
 knights,



Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy  
mood

With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken  
voice,

And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who  
prized him more

Than who should prize him most ; at  
which the King

Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by :  
But one had watch'd, and had not held  
his peace :

It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the blameless  
King.

And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all those  
times,

Merlin, who knew the range of all their  
arts,

Had built the King his havens, ships,  
and halls,

Was also Bard, and knew the starry  
heavens ;

The people call'd him Wizard ; whom at  
first

She play'd about with slight and sprightly  
talk,

And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd  
points

Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
there ;

And yielding to his kindlier moods, the  
Seer

Would watch her at her petulance, and  
play,

Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable, and  
laugh

As those that watch a kitten ; thus he  
grew

Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and  
she,

Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
Turn red or pale, would often when they  
met

Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
With such a fixt devotion, that the old  
man,

Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at  
times

Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
And half believe her true : for thus at  
times

He waver'd ; but that other clung to him,  
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.

Then fell on Merlina great melancholy ;  
He walk'd with dreams and darkness,  
and he found

A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
World-war of dying flesh against the life,  
Death in all life and lying in all love,  
The meanest having power upon the  
highest,

And the high purpose broken by the  
worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the  
beach ;

There found a little boat, and stept into  
it ;

And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her  
not.

She took the helm and he the sail ; the  
boat

Drave with a sudden wind across the  
deeps,

And touching Breton sands, they dis-  
embark'd.

And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.

For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
The which if any wrought on anyone

With woven paces and with waving arms,  
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie

Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
From which was no escape for evermore ;

And none could find that man for ever-  
more,

Nor could he see but him who wrought  
the charm

Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
And lost to life and use and name and  
fame.

And Vivien ever sought to work the  
charm

Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,

As fancying that her glory would be great  
According to his greatness whom she  
quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd  
his feet,  
As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
A twist of gold was round her hair; a  
robe

Of samite without price, that more exprest  
Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
limbs,

In colour like the satin-shining palm  
On sallows in the windy gleams of March:  
And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
'Trample me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the  
world,

And I will pay you worship; tread me  
down

And I will kiss you for it'; he was mute:  
So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
brain,

As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
The blind wave feeling round his long  
sea-hall

In silence: wherefore, when she lifted up  
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,  
'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once  
more,

'Great Master, do ye love me?' he was  
mute.

And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,  
Writhed toward him, slid up his knee  
and sat,

Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
Together, curv'd an arm about his neck,  
Clung like a snake; and letting her left  
hand

Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
Made with her right a comb of pearl to  
part

The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
Had left in ashes: then he spoke and said,  
Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in love  
Love most, say least,' and Vivien an-  
swer'd quick,

'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:

But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid  
child!

Yet you are wise who say it; let me think  
Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,  
And ask no kiss'; then adding all at once,  
'And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,'  
drew

The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,  
Who meant to eat her up in that wild  
wood

Without one word. So Vivien call'd  
herself,

But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
Veil'd in gray vapour; till he sadly  
smiled:

'To what request for what strange boon,'  
he said,

'Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
O Vivien, the preamble? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
'What, O my Master, have ye found  
your voice?

I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at  
last!

But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
Except indeed to drink: no cup had we:  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the  
spring

That gather'd trickling dropwise from  
the cleft,

And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling: then you  
drank

And knew no more, nor gave me one  
poor word;

O no more thanks than might a goat have  
given

With no more sign of reverence than a  
beard.

And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
those

Deep meadows we had traversed, did  
you know

That Vivien bathed your feet before her own?

And yet no thanks: and all thro' this wild wood

And all this morning when I fondled you: Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so strange—

How had I wrong'd you? surely ye are wise,

But such a silence is more wise than kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said:

'O did ye never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave

Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks?

Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,  
Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.

And then I rose and fled from Arthur's court

To break the mood. You follow'd me unask'd;

And when I look'd, and saw you following still,

My mind involved yourself the nearest thing

In that mind-mist: for shall I tell you truth?

You seem'd that wave about to break upon me

And sweep me from my hold upon the world,

My use and name and fame. Your pardon, child,

Your pretty sports have brighten'd all again.

And ask your boon, for boon I owe you thrice,

Once for wrong done you by confusion, next

For thanks it seems till now neglected, last

For these your dainty gambols: wherefore ask;

And take this boon so strange and not so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:

'O not so strange as my long asking it,  
Not yet so strange as you yourself are strange,

Nor half so strange as that dark mood of yours.

I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;  
And see, yourself have own'd ye did me wrong.

The people call you prophet: let it be:  
But not of those that can expound themselves.

Take Vivien for expounder; she will call  
That three-days-long presageful gloom of yours

No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
That makes you seem less noble than yourself,

Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
Now ask'd again: for see you not, dear love,

That such a mood as that, which lately gloom'd

Your fancy when ye saw me following you,

Must make me fear still more you are not mine,

Must make me yearn still more to prove you mine,

And make me wish still more to learn this charm

Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.  
The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.

For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine.

And therefore be as great as ye are named,  
Not muffled round with selfish reticence.  
How hard you look and how denyingly!

O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
That I should prove it on you unawares,  
That makes me passing wrathful; then our bond

Had best be loosed for ever: but think or not.

By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean truth,  
As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk :

O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell

Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat,

If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am;  
And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
The great proof of your love : because I think,  
However wise, ye hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers,  
and said,

'I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a charm.

Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man

Thro' woman the first hour ; for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the world,

In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised when I spell the lines,

I call it,—well, I will not call it vice :  
But since you name yourself the summer fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness :  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will ye never ask some other boon ?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,

Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears :  
'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your maid ;

Caress her : let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
I think ye hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of "trust me not at all or all in all."  
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,  
And it shall answer for me.' Listen to it.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the lover's lute  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping : let it go :  
But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all."

O Master, do ye love my tender rhyme ?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed her true,  
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears

Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower :

And yet he answer'd half indignantly :

'Far other was the song that once I heard

By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit :  
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
To chase a creature that was current then  
In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.

It was the time when first the question rose

About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the world.

And each incited each to noble deeds.  
 And while we waited, one, the youngest  
 of us,  
 We could not keep him silent, out he  
 flash'd,  
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
 That when he stopt we long'd to hurl  
 together,  
 And should have done it; but the beau-  
 teous beast  
 Scared by the noise upstart'd at our feet,  
 And like a silver shadow slipt away  
 Thro' the dim land; and all day long we  
 rode  
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing  
 wind,  
 That glorious roundel echoing in our  
 ears,  
 And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—  
 Where children cast their pins and nails,  
 and cry,  
 “Laugh, little well!” but touch it with  
 a sword,  
 It buzzes fiercely round the point; and  
 there  
 We lost him: such a noble song was that.  
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet  
 rhyme,  
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and  
 fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
 fully:  
 ‘O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
 And all thro' following you to this wild  
 wood,  
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
 Lo now, what hearts have men! they  
 never mount  
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
 And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my  
 song,  
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks it  
 —this:

“My name, once mine, now thine, is  
 closelier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame  
 were thine,  
 And shame, could shame be thine, that  
 shame were mine.  
 So trust me not at all or all in all.”

‘Says she not well? and there is more  
 —this rhyme  
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the  
 Queen,  
 That burst in dancing, and the pearls  
 were spilt;  
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics  
 kept.  
 But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each  
 other  
 On her white neck—so is it with this  
 rhyme:  
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
 And every minstrel sings it differently;  
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of  
 pearls:  
 “Man dreams of Fame while woman  
 wakes to love.”  
 Yea! Love, tho' Love were of the gross-  
 est, carves  
 A portion from the solid present, eats  
 And uses, careless of the rest; but Fame,  
 The Fame that follows death is nothing  
 to us;  
 And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
 And counterchanged with darkness? ye  
 yourself  
 Know well that Envy calls you Devil's  
 son,  
 And since ye seem the Master of all Art,  
 They fain would make you Master of all  
 vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and  
 said,  
 ‘I once was looking for a magic weed,  
 And found a fair young squire who sat  
 alone,  
 Had carved himself a knightly shield of  
 wood,  
 And then was painting on it fancied arms,

Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun  
In dexter chief; the scroll "I follow  
fame."

And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a Gardener putting in a graff,  
With this for motto, "Rather use than  
fame."

You should have seen him blush; but  
afterwards

He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love me  
well;

For me, I love you somewhat; rest: and  
Love

Should have some rest and pleasure in  
himself,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him ye say ye love: but Fame with  
men,

Being but ampler means to serve man-  
kind,

Should have small rest or pleasure in  
herself,

But work as vassal to the larger love,  
That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame  
again

Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my  
boon!

What other? for men sought to prove me  
vile,

Because I fain had given them greater  
wits:

And then did Envy call me Devil's son:  
The sick weak beast seeking to help her-  
self

By striking at her better, miss'd, and  
brought

Her own claw back, and wounded her  
own heart.

Sweet were the days when I was all un-  
known,

But when my name was lifted up, the  
storm

Brake on the mountain and I cared not  
for it.

Right well know I that Fame is half-  
disfame,

Yet needs must work my work. That  
other fame,

To one at least, who hath not children,  
vague,

The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it: a single misty star,

Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,

I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star

To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I  
fear,

Giving you power upon me thro' this  
charm,

That you might play me falsely, having  
power,

However well ye think ye love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupilage

Have turn'd to tyrants when they came  
to power)

I rather dread the loss of use than fame;  
If you—and not so much from wickedness,

As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,

To keep me all to your own self,—or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—

Should try this charm on whom ye say ye  
love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in  
wrath:

'Have I not sworn? I am not trusted.  
Good!

Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;  
And being found take heed of Vivien.

A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born

Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine

Without the full heart back may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,

My daily wonder is, I love at all.

And as to woman's jealousy, O why not?  
O to what end, except a jealous one,

And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by yourself?

I well believe that all about this world  
Ye cage a buxom captive here and there,

Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
From which is no escape for evermore.'



Then the great Master merrily answer'd  
 her :  
 ' Full many a love in loving youth was  
 mine ;  
 I needed then no charm to keep them mine  
 But youth and love ; and that full heart  
 of yours  
 Whereof ye prattle, may now assure you  
 mine ;  
 So live uncharm'd. For those who  
 wrought it first,  
 The wrist is parted from the hand that  
 waved,  
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-  
 bones  
 Who paced it, ages back : but will ye hear  
 The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme ?

' There lived a king in the most Eastern  
 East,  
 Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
 Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
 A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
 Whose bark had plunder'd twenty name-  
 less isles ;  
 And passing one, at the high peep of  
 dawn,  
 He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
 All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
 And pushing his black craft among them  
 all,  
 He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought  
 her off,  
 With loss of half his people arrow-slain ;  
 A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,  
 They said a light came from her when she  
 moved :  
 And since the pirate would not yield her  
 up,  
 The King impaled him for his piracy ;  
 Then made her Queen : but those isle-  
 nurtured eyes  
 Waged such unwilling tho' successful war  
 On all the youth, they sicken'd ; councils  
 thinn'd,  
 And armies waned, for magnet-like she  
 drew  
 The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;  
 And beasts themselves would worship ;  
 camels knelt

Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain  
 back  
 That carry kings in castles, bow'd black  
 knees  
 Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
 hands,  
 To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.  
 What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
 His horns of proclamation out thro' all  
 The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
 sway'd  
 To find a wizard whomight teach the King  
 Some charm, which being wrought upon  
 the Queen  
 Might keep her all his own : to such a one  
 He promised more than ever king has  
 given,  
 A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
 A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 A palace and a princess, all for him :  
 But on all those who tried and fail'd, the  
 King  
 Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning  
 by it  
 To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
 Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
 Their heads should moulder on the city  
 gates.  
 And many tried and fail'd, because the  
 charm  
 Of nature in her overbore their own :  
 And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the  
 walls :  
 And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
 Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
 towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said :  
 ' I sit and gather honey ; yet, methinks,  
 Thy tongue has tript a little : ask thyself.  
 The lady never made *unwilling* war  
 With those fine eyes : she had her pleasure  
 in it,  
 And made her good man jealous with good  
 cause.  
 And lived there neither dame nor damsel  
 then  
 Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as tame,  
 I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair ?  
 Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,

Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
 Or make her paler with a poison'd rose?  
 Well, those were not our days: but did  
 they find  
 A wizard? Tell me, was he like to thee?

She ceased, and made her lithe arm  
 round his neck  
 Tighten, and then drew back, and let her  
 eyes  
 Speak for her, glowing on him, like a  
 bride's  
 On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not like  
 to me.  
 At last they found—his foragers for  
 charms—  
 A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
 Who lived alone in a great wild on grass;  
 Read but one book, and ever reading  
 grew  
 So grated down and filed away with  
 thought,  
 So lean his eyes were monstrous; while  
 the skin  
 Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and  
 spine.  
 And since he kept his mind on one sole  
 aim,  
 Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted  
 flesh,  
 Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
 That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting  
 men  
 Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
 And heard their voices talk behind the  
 wall,  
 And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
 And forces; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
 Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
 And lash'd it at the base with slanting  
 storm;  
 Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
 When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood  
 roar'd,  
 And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow,  
 sunn'd  
 The world to peace again: here was the  
 man.

And so by force they dragg'd him to the  
 King.  
 And then he taught the King to charm  
 the Queen  
 In such-wise, that no man could see her  
 more,  
 Nor saw she save the King, who wrought  
 the charm,  
 Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
 And lost all use of life: but when the King  
 Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
 The province with a hundred miles of coast,  
 The palace and the princess, that old man  
 Went back to his old wild, and lived on  
 grass,  
 And vanish'd, and his book came down  
 to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily:  
 'Ye have the book: the charm is written  
 in it:  
 Good: take my counsel: let me know it  
 at once:  
 For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
 With each chest lock'd and padlock'd  
 thirty-fold,  
 And whelm all this beneath as vast a  
 mound  
 As after furious battle turfs the slain  
 On some wild down above the windy deep,  
 I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
 To dig, pick, open, find and read the  
 charm:  
 Then, if I tried it, who should blame me  
 then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
 That is not of his school, nor any school  
 But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
 Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
 On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

'Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
 O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
 But every page having an ample marge,  
 And every marge enclosing in the midst  
 A square of text that looks a little blot,  
 The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;  
 And every square of text an awful charm,  
 Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
 So long, that mountains have arisen since

With cities on their flanks—thou read the book !

And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd

With comment, densest condensation, hard To mind and eye ; but the long sleepless nights

Of my long life have made it easy to me. And none can read the text, not even I ; And none can read the comment but myself ;

And in the comment did I find the charm. O, the results are simple ; a mere child Might use it to the harm of anyone, And never could undo it : ask no more : For tho' you should not prove it upon me, But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,

Assay it on some one of the Table Round, And all because ye dream they babble of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said :

'What dare the full-fed liars say of me? *They* ride abroad redressing human wrongs !

They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn !

*They* bound to holy vows of chastity !

Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.

But you are man, you well can understand The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.

Not one of all the drove should touch me : swine !'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words :

'You breathe but accusation vast and vague,

Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If ye know,

Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall !'

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully :

'O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife

And two fair babes, and went to distant lands ;

Was one year gone, and on returning found Not two but three ? there lay the reckling, one

But one hour old ! What said the happy sire ?

A seven-months' babe had been a truer gift. Those twelve sweet moons confused his fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin, 'Nay, I know the tale.

Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame : Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his wife :

One child they had : it lived with her : she died :

His kinsman travelling on his own affair Was charged by Valence to bring home the child.

He brought, not found it therefore : take the truth.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'overtrue a tale.

What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore, That ardent man ? "to pluck the flower in season,"

So says the song, "I trow it is no treason."

O Master, shall we call him overquick To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ?'

And Merlin answer'd, 'Overquick art thou

To catch a loathly plume fall'n from the wing

Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey

Is man's good name : he never wrong'd his bride.

I know the tale. An angry gust of wind Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd

And many-corridor'd complexities Of Arthur's palace : then he found a door, And darkling felt the sculptured ornament That wreathen round it made it seem his own ;

And wearied out made for the couch and slept,

A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely  
down,

Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from  
her :

But when the thing was blazed about the  
court,

The brute world howling forced them into  
bonds,

And as it chanced they are happy, being  
pure.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely  
too.

What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of  
Christ,

Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead !'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her  
charge,

'A sober man is Percivale and pure ;  
But once in life was fluster'd with new  
wine,

Then paced for coolness in the chapel-  
yard ;

Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's  
mark ;

And that he sinn'd is not believable ;  
For, look upon his face !—but if he sinn'd,  
The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings  
remorse,

Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :  
Or else were he, the holy king, whose  
hymns

Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye  
more ?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in  
wrath :

'O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend

Traitor or true ? that commerce with the  
Queen,

I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do ye know  
it ?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'Yea, I  
know it.

Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she watch'd him from  
her walls.

A rumour runs, she took him for the King,  
So fixt her fancy on him : let them be.  
But have ye no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless  
man ?'

She answer'd with a low and chuckling  
laugh :

'Man ! is he man at all, who knows and  
winks ?

Sees what his fair bride is and does, and  
winks ?

By which the good King means to blind  
himself,

And blinds himself and all the Table Round  
To all the foulness that they work. Myself  
Could call him (were it not for womanhood)  
The pretty, popular name such manhood  
earns,

Could call him the main cause of all their  
crime ;

Yea, were he not crown'd King, coward,  
and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing,  
said :

'O true and tender ! O my liege and  
King !

O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye-  
witness fain

Have all men true and leal, all women  
pure ;

How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible

To things with every sense as false and foul  
As the poach'd filth that floods the middle  
street,

Is thy white blamelessness accounted  
blame !'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne  
By instance, recommenced, and let her  
tongue  
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,  
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left  
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad  
clean.

Her words had issue other than she  
will'd.  
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,  
and made  
A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself, 'Tell *her* the  
charm !  
So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
To snare the next, and if she have it not  
So will she rail. What did the wanton say?  
"Not mount as high"; we scarce can sink  
as low :  
For men at most differ as Heaven and  
earth,  
But women, worst and best, as Heaven  
and Hell.  
I know the Table Round, my friends of  
old ;  
All brave, and many generous, and some  
chaste.  
She cloaks the scar of some repulse with  
lies ;  
I well believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
Being so bitter : for fine plots may fail,  
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
With colours of the heart that are not theirs.  
I will not let her know : nine tithes of  
times  
Face-flatterer and backbiter are the same.  
And they, sweet soul, that most impute a  
crime  
Are prone to it, and impute themselves,  
Wanting the mental range ; or low desire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level all ;  
Yea, they would pare the mountain to the  
plain,  
To leave an equal baseness ; and in this  
Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
Not grieving that their greatest are so  
small,

Inflate themselves with some insane  
delight,  
And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual  
fire,  
And touching other worlds. I am weary  
of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in  
whispers part,  
Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
And many-winter'd fleece of throat and  
chin.  
But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his  
mood,  
And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or  
thrice,  
Leapt from her session on his lap, and  
stood  
Stiff as a viper frozen ; loathsome sight,  
How from the rosy lips of life and love,  
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of  
death !  
White was her cheek ; sharp breaths of  
anger puff'd  
Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-  
clench'd  
Went faltering sideways downward to her  
belt,  
And feeling ; had she found a dagger  
there  
(For in a wink the false love turns to  
hate)  
She would have stabb'd him ; but she  
found it not :  
His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
Then her false voice made way, broken  
with sobs :

'O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd love !  
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
Or seeming shameful—for what shame in  
love,  
So love be true, and not as yours is—  
nothing  
Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust

Who call'd her what he call'd her—all  
her crime,  
All—all—the wish to prove him wholly  
hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt her  
hands

Together with a wailing shriek, and said :  
' Stabb'd through the heart's affections to  
the heart !

Seethed like the kid in its own mother's  
milk !

Kill'd with a word worse than a life of  
blows !

I thought that he was gentle, being great :  
O God, that I had loved a smaller man !  
I should have found in him a greater  
heart.

O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
The knights, the court, the King, dark  
in your light,

Who loved to make men darker than they  
are,

Because of that 'high pleasure which I  
had

To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
Of worship—I am answer'd, and hence-  
forth

The course of life that seem'd so flowery  
to me

With you for guide and master, only you,  
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
short,

And ending in a ruin—nothing left,  
But into some low cave to crawl, and  
there,

If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung  
her head,

The snake of gold slid from her hair, the  
braid

Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
And the dark wood grew darker toward  
the storm

In silence, while his anger slowly died  
Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
For ease of heart, and half believed her  
true :

Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
' Come from the storm,' and having no  
reply,

Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the  
face

Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or  
shame ;

Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching  
terms,

To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in  
vain.

At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settled  
there.

There while she sat, half-falling from his  
knees,

Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
The slow tear creep from her closed eye-  
lid yet,

About her, more in kindness than in love,  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.

But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,  
Her arms upon her breast across, and  
stood,

A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him : then she  
said :

' There must be now no passages of love  
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore ;  
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
What should be granted which your own  
gross heart

Would reckon worth the taking? I will  
go.

In truth, but one thing now—better have  
died

Thrice than have ask'd it once—could  
make me stay—

That proof of trust—so often ask'd in  
vain !

How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
I find with grief ! I might believe you  
then,

Who knows? once more. Lo ! what was  
once to me

Mere matter of the fancy, now hath grown  
The vast necessity of heart and life.



Farewell ; think gently of me, for I fear  
 My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
 For one so old, must be to love thee still.  
 But ere I leave thee let me swear once  
     more  
 That if I schemed against thy peace in  
     this,  
 May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er  
     me, send  
 One flash, that, missing all things else,  
     may make  
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
     heaven a bolt  
 (For now the storm was close above them)  
     struck,  
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
 With darted spikes and splinters of the  
     wood  
 The dark earth round. He raised his  
     eyes and saw  
 The tree that shone white-listed thro' the  
     gloom.  
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her  
     oath,  
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
 And deafen'd with the stammering cracks  
     and claps  
 That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
 Yet save me !' clung to him and hugg'd  
     him close ;  
 And call'd him dear protector in her  
     fright,  
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
 But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd  
     him close.  
 The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
 Took gayer colours, like an opal warm'd.  
 She blamed herself for telling hearsay  
     tales :  
 She shook from fear, and for her fault  
     she wept  
 Of petulancy ; she call'd him lord and  
     liege,  
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
 Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate  
     love  
 -Of her whole life ; and ever overhead

Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
     branch  
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
 Above them ; and in change of glare and  
     gloom  
 Her eyes and neck glittering went and  
     came ;  
 Till now the storm, its burst of passion  
     spent,  
 Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
 Had left the ravaged woodland yet once  
     more  
 To peace ; and what should not have been  
     had been,  
 For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
 Had yielded, told her all the charm, and  
     slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
     the charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
 And lost to life and use and name and  
     fame.

Then crying 'I have made his glory  
     mine,'  
 And shrieking out 'O fool !' the harlot  
     leapt  
 Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
 Behind her, and the forest echo'd 'fool.'

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to the  
     east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot ;  
 Which first she placed where morning's  
     earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with the  
     gleam ;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
 And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day,

Leaving her household and good father,  
     climb'd  
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd  
     her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked  
     shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his  
     arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made  
     upon it,  
 Conjecturing when and where: this cut  
     is fresh;  
 That ten years back; this dealt him at  
     Caerlyle;  
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:  
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was  
     there!  
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd,  
     but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
     enemy down,  
 And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good  
     shield  
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his  
     name?  
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond  
     jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that  
     name  
 Had named them, since a diamond was  
     the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd  
     him King,  
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and black  
     tarn.  
 A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
 Like its own mists to all the mountain  
     side:  
 For here two brothers, one a king, had  
     met  
 And fought together; but their names  
     were lost;  
 And each had slain his brother at a blow;

And down they fell and made the glen  
     abhorr'd:  
 And there they lay till all their bones  
     were bleach'd,  
 And lichen'd into colour with the crags:  
 And he, that once was king, had on a  
     crown  
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
 And Arthur came, and labouring up the  
     pass,  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares.  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and  
     the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the skull  
     the crown  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:  
 And down the shingly scaur he plunged,  
     and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt  
     be King.'

Thereafter, when a King, he had the  
     gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them  
     to his knights,  
 Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I  
     chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the  
     King's—  
 For public use: henceforward let there be,  
 Once every year, a joust for one of these:  
 For so by nine years' proof we needs  
     must learn  
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves  
     shall grow  
 In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule  
     the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder.' Thus he  
     spoke:  
 And eight years past, eight jousts had  
     been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the  
     year,  
 With purpose to present them to the  
     Queen,  
 When all were won; but meaning all at  
     once

To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never spoken  
word.

Now for the central diamond and the  
last  
And largest, Arthur, holding then his  
court

Hard on the river nigh the place which  
now

Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guine-  
vere,

'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot  
move

To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she  
said, 'ye know it.'

'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the  
great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
A sight ye love to look on.' And the  
Queen

Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the  
King.

He thinking that he read her meaning  
there,

'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is  
more

Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a  
heart

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
(However much he yearn'd to make  
complete

The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)  
Urged him to speak against the truth,  
and say,

'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly  
whole,

And lets me from the saddle'; and the  
King

Glanced first at him, then her, and went  
his way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
much to blame!

Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the  
knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the  
crowd

Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones,  
who take

Their pastime now the trustful King is  
gone!"'

Then Lancelot vexed at having lied in vain:  
'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,  
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved  
me first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade  
of grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to  
knights,

Them surely can I silence with all ease.  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd

Of all men: many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guine-  
vere,

The pearl of beauty: and our knights at  
feast

Have pledged us in this union, while the  
King

Would listen smiling. How then? is  
there more?

Has Arthur spoken aught? or would  
yourself,

Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh:  
'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless

King,  
That passionate perfection, my good  
lord—

But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me: only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his  
eyes:

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with  
him—else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself: but, friend,  
to me

He is all fault who hath no fault at all :  
For who loves me must have a touch of  
earth ;

The low sun maketh the colour : I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the  
bond.

And therefore hear my words : go to the  
jousts :

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our  
dream

When sweetest ; and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but  
they sting.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights :

'And with what face, after my pretext  
made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a King who honours his own  
word,

As if it were his God's ?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,

'A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit : we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at  
a touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot ; your great  
name,

This conquers : hide it therefore ; go  
unknown :

Win ! by this kiss you will : and our true  
King

Will then allow your pretext, O my  
knight,

As all for glory ; for to speak him true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he  
seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.

He loves it in his knights more than  
himself :

They prove to him his work : win and  
return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be  
known,

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,

Chose the green path that show'd the  
rarer foot,

And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the  
dales

Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the  
towers.

Thither he made, and blew the gateway  
horn.

Then came an old, dumb, myriad-  
wrinkled man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless  
man ;

And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir  
Lavaine,

Moving to meet him in the castle court ;  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house  
There was not : some light jest among  
them rose

With laughter dying down as the great  
knight

Approach'd them : then the Lord of  
Astolat :

'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by  
what name

Livest between the lips ? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of  
those,

After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen : the rest, his Table  
Round,

Known as they are, to me they are un-  
known.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of  
knights :

'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and  
known,

What I by mere mischance have brought,  
my shield.

But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
Hereafter ye shall know me—and the  
shield—

I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not  
mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat, 'Here  
is Torre's:

Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank  
enough.

His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir  
Torre,

'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have  
it.'

Here laugh'd the father saying, 'Fie, Sir  
Churl,

Is that an answer for a noble knight?  
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger  
here,

He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an  
hour,

And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay good father, shame  
me not

Before this noble knight,' said young  
Lavaine,

'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on  
Torre:

He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:  
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden  
dreamt

That some one put this diamond in her  
hand,

And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
The castle-well, belike; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was  
jest.

But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win:  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd  
Lancelot,

Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship

O'er these waste downs whereon I lost  
myself,

Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend:

And you shall win this diamond,—as I  
hear

It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir  
Torre,

'Such be for queens, and not for simple  
maids.'

Then she, who held her eyes upon the  
ground,

Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking  
at her,

Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:  
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem  
this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid  
Elaine,

Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the  
Queen,

In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere  
his time.

Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the  
world,

Had been the sleeker for it: but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest  
man

That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her  
years,

Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the  
cheek,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up  
her eyes  
And loved him, with that love which was  
her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of  
the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half  
disdain

Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind :  
Whom they with meats and vintage of  
their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
And much they ask'd of court and Table  
Round,

And ever well and readily answer'd he :  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at  
Guinevere,

Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years  
before,

The heathen caught and reft him of his  
tongue.

'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce  
design

Against my house, and him they caught  
and maim'd ;

But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among  
the woods

By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur  
broke

The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O there, great lord; doubtless,' Lavaine  
said, rapt

By all the sweet and sudden passion of  
youth

Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have  
fought.

O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot  
spoke

And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent  
Glem ;

And in the four loud battles by the shore  
Of Duglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy  
skirts

Of Celidon the forest ; and again  
By castle Gurnion, where the glorious  
King

Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he  
breathed ;

And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild  
white Horse

Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;  
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath  
Treiroit,

Where many a heathen fell ; 'and on the  
mount

Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them ; and I saw him, after,  
stand

High on a heap of slain, from spur to  
plume

Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
"They are broken, they are broken!"  
for the King,

However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the  
jousts—

For if his own knight cast him down, he  
laughs

Saying, his knights are better men than  
he—

Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives  
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
'Save your great self, fair lord' ; and  
when he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—  
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—  
She still took note that when the living  
smile



Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
The lily maid had striven to make him  
cheer,  
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
Of manners and of nature: and she  
thought

That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
And all night long his face before her lived,  
As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and colour of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best  
And fullest; so the face before her lived,  
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,  
full

Of noble things, and held her from her  
sleep,

Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the  
thought

She needs must bid farewell to sweet  
Lavaine.

First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:  
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the  
court,

'This shield, my friend, where is it?'  
and Lavaine

Past inward, as she came from out the  
tower.

There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd,  
and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she  
drew

Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more  
amazed

Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
The maiden standing in the dewy light.  
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,  
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood  
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.  
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.  
'Fair lord, whose name I know not—  
noble it is,

I well believe, the noblest—wilt you wear  
My favour at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said  
he,

'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists.

Such is my wont, as those, who know me,  
know.'

'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing  
mine

Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble  
lord,

That those who know should know you.'  
And he turn'd

Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
And found it true, and answer'd, 'True,  
my child.

Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
What is it?' and she told him 'A red  
sleeve

Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it:  
then he bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
Saying, 'I never yet have done so much  
For any maiden living,' and the blood  
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with  
delight;

But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd  
shield,

His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:  
'Do me this grace, my child, to have my  
shield

In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'  
She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your  
squire!'

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily  
maid,

For fear our people call you lily maid  
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;  
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you  
hence to bed':

So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own  
hand,

And thus they moved away: she stay'd  
a minute,

Then made a sudden step to the gate,  
and there—

Her bright hair blown about the serious  
face

Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—  
 Paused by the gateway, standing near  
 the shield  
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms  
 far-off  
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took  
 the shield,  
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past  
 away  
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs,  
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived  
 a knight  
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and  
 pray'd,  
 And ever labouring had scoop'd himself  
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
 And cells and chambers: all were fair  
 and dry;  
 The green light from the meadows under-  
 neath  
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;  
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees  
 And poplars made a noise of falling  
 showers.  
 And thither wending there that night they  
 bode.

But when the next day broke from  
 underground,  
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the  
 cave,  
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
 rode away:  
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold  
 my name  
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
 Lake,'  
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant rever-  
 ence,  
 Dearer to true young hearts than their  
 own praise,  
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it  
 indeed?'  
 And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'

At last he got his breath and answer'd,  
 'One,  
 One have I seen—that other, our liege  
 lord,  
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of  
 kings,  
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
 He will be there—then were I stricken  
 blind  
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they  
 reach'd the lists  
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half  
 round  
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,  
 Until they found the clear-faced King,  
 who sat  
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
 Since to his crown the golden dragon  
 clung,  
 And down his robe the dragon writhed  
 in gold,  
 And from the carven-work behind him  
 crept  
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to  
 make  
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of  
 them  
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innu-  
 merable  
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
 found  
 The new design wherein they lost them-  
 selves,  
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:  
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless  
 king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine  
 and said,  
 'Me you call great: mine is the firmer  
 seat,  
 The truer lance: but there is many a youth  
 Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
 And overcome it; and in me there dwells  
 No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
 Of greatness to know well I am not great:

There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped  
upon him

As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew; and then did either  
side,

They that assail'd, and they that held the  
lists,

Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
move,

Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
Shock, that a man far-off might well  
perceive,

If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder  
of arms.

And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd  
into it

Against the stronger: little need to speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke,  
earl,

Count, baron—whom he smote, he over-  
threw.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith  
and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that held  
the lists,

Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger  
knight

Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other,  
'Lo!

What is he? I do not mean the force  
alone—

The grace and versatility of the man!  
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lance-  
lot worn

Favour of any lady in the lists?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know him,  
know.'

'How then? who then?' a fury seized  
them all,

A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their  
steeds, and thus,

Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind  
they made

In moving, all together down upon him

Bare, as a wild wave in the wild North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit,  
bears, with all

Its stormy crests that smoke against the  
skies,

Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it, so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a  
spear

Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the  
head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,  
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-  
shipfully;

He bore a knight of old repute to the  
earth,

And brought his horse to Lancelot where  
he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet  
endure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with,—drave his kith  
and kin,

And all the Table Round that held the  
lists,

Back to the barrier; then the trumpets  
blew

Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the  
sleeve

Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the  
knights,

His party, cried 'Advance and take thy  
prize

The diamond'; but he answer'd, 'Diamond  
me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!  
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow  
me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from  
the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
There from his charger down he slid, and  
sat,

Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head':

'Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,

'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'

But he, 'I die already with it: draw—Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,

And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.

Then came the hermit out and bare him in,

There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a week Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove

Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North and West,

Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,

Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,

'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,

Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize

Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'

'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an one,

So great a knight as we have seen to-day—

He seem'd to me another Lancelot—

Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—

He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore, rise,

O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.

Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.

I charge you that you get at once to horse. And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:

His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him

No customary honour: since the knight Came not to us, of us to claim the prize, Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take This diamond, and deliver it, and return, And bring us where he is, and how he fares,

And cease not from your quest until ye find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above, To which it made a restless heart, he took, And gave, the diamond: then from where he sat

At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose, With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince

In the mid might and flourish of his May, Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,

And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint

And Gareth, a good knight, but there-withal

Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot, Nor often loyal to his word, and now Wroth that the King's command to sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave

The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;

While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,

Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who hath come

Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain

Of glory, and hath added wound to wound, And ridd'n away to die?' So fear'd the King,

And, after two days' tarriance there,  
 return'd.  
 Then when he saw the Queen, embrac-  
 ing ask'd,  
 'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,  
 lord,' she said.  
 'And where is Lancelot?' Then the  
 Queen amazed,  
 'Was he not with you? won he not your  
 prize?'  
 'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that like  
 was he.'  
 And when the King demanded how she  
 knew,  
 Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted  
 from us,  
 Than Lancelot told me of a common  
 talk  
 That men went down before his spear at  
 a touch,  
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his great  
 name  
 Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide  
 his name  
 From all men, ev'n the King, and to this  
 end  
 Had made the pretext of a hindering  
 wound,  
 That he might joust unknown of all, and  
 learn  
 If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;  
 And added, "Our true Arthur, when he  
 learns,  
 Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
 Of purer glory."'

Then replied the King:  
 'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
 To have trusted me as he hath trusted  
 thee.  
 Surely his King and most familiar friend  
 Might well have kept his secret. True,  
 indeed,  
 Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
 Must needs have moved my laughter:  
 now remains  
 But little cause for laughter: his own  
 kin—

Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him,  
 this!—  
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon  
 him;  
 So that he went sore wounded from the  
 field:  
 Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are  
 mine  
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
 He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great  
 pearls,  
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
 'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that,  
 she choked,  
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
 Past to her chamber, and there flung  
 herself  
 Down on the great King's couch, and  
 writhed upon it,  
 And clench'd her fingers till they bit the  
 palm,  
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the 'un-  
 hearing wall,  
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose  
 again,  
 And moved about her palace, proud and  
 pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region  
 round  
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the  
 quest,  
 Touch'd at all points, except the poplar  
 grove,  
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:  
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the  
 maid  
 Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from  
 Camelot, lord?  
 What of the knight with the red sleeve?'  
 'He won.'  
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from  
 the jousts  
 Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught her  
 breath;  
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp  
 lance go;

Thereon she smote her hand : wellnigh  
she swoon'd :

And, while he gazed wonderingly at her,  
came

The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the  
Prince

Reported who he was, and on what quest  
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not  
find

The victor, but had ridd'n a random  
round

To seek him, and had wearied of the  
search.

To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide with  
us,

And ride no more at random, noble  
Prince !

Here was the knight, and here he left a  
shield ;

This will he send or come for : further-  
more

Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,  
Needs must we hear.' To this the cour-  
teous Prince

Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair  
Elaine :

Where could be found face daintier ? then  
her shape

From forehead down to foot, perfect—  
again

From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :  
' Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for  
me ! '

And oft they met among the garden yews,  
And there he set himself to play upon her  
With sallying wit, tree flashes from a  
height

Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden elo-  
quence

And amorous adulation, till the maid  
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, ' Prince,  
O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
Whence you might learn his name ? Why  
slight your King,

And lose the quest he sent you on, and  
prove

No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and  
went

To all the winds ? ' ' Nay, by mine  
head,' said he,

' I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes ;  
But an ye will it let me see the shield.'

And when the shield was brought, and  
Gawain saw

Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with  
gold,

Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,  
and mock'd :

' Right was the King ! our Lancelot !  
that true man ! '

' And right was I,' she answer'd merrily,  
' I,

Who dream'd my knight the greatest  
knight of all.'

' And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, ' that  
you love

This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo,  
ye know it !

Speak therefore : shall I waste myself in  
vain ? '

Full simple was her answer, ' What know  
I ?

My brethren have been all my fellow-  
ship ;

And I, when often they have talk'd of  
love,

Wish'd it had been my mother, for they  
talk'd,

Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so  
myself—

I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
I know there is none other I can love.'

' Yea, by God's death,' said he, ' ye love  
him well,

But would not, knew ye what all others  
know,

And whom he loves.' ' So be it,' cried  
Elaine,

And lifted her fair face and moved away :  
But he pursued her, calling, ' Stay a  
little !

One golden minute's grace ! he wore  
your sleeve :



Would he break faith with one I may not  
name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at  
last?

Nay—like enow: why then, far be it  
from me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his  
loves!

And, damsel, for I deem you know full  
well

Where your great knight is hidden, let  
me leave

My quest with you; the diamond also:  
here!

For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
From your own hand; and whether he  
love or not,

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
A thousand times!—a thousand times  
faréwell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we  
two

May meet at court hereafter: there, I  
think,

So ye will learn the courtesies of the  
court,

We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,

And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he  
gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the  
quest

Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he  
went

A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told  
the King

What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is  
the knight.'

And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I  
learnt;

But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all  
round

The region: but I lighted on the maid  
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him;  
and to her,

Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,

I gave the diamond: she will render it;  
For by mine head she knows his hiding-  
place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,  
and replied,

'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more  
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget  
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all  
in awe,

For twenty strokes of the blood, without  
a word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him;  
Then shook his hair, strode off, and  
buzz'd abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues  
were loosed:

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lance-  
lot,

Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'  
Some read the King's face, some the  
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but  
most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old  
dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with the  
sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it  
before,

But sorrowing Lancelot should have  
stoop'd so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-  
quillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder  
flared:

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or  
thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the  
Queen,

And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
Smiled at each other, while the Queen,  
who sat

With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
Climb in her throat, and with her feet  
unseen

Crush'd the wild passion out against the  
 floor  
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats  
 became  
 As wormwood, and she hated all who  
 pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
 The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her  
 heart,

Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face  
 and said,

'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
 Is yours who let me have my will, and  
 now,

Sweet father, will you let me lose my  
 wits?'

'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore,  
 let me hence,'

She answer'd, 'and find out our dear  
 Lavaine.'

'Ye will not lose your wits for dear  
 Lavaine :

Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear  
 anon

Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she  
 said,

'And of that other, for I needs must hence  
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
 And with mine own hand give his diamond  
 to him,

Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
 As yon proud Prince who left the quest  
 to me.

Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Death - pale, for lack of gentle maiden's  
 aid.

The gentler-born the maiden, the more  
 bound,

My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye know  
 When these have worn their tokens: let  
 me hence

I pray you.' Then her father nodding  
 said,

'Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my  
 child,

Right fain were I to learn this knight  
 were whole,

Being our greatest: yea, and you must  
 give it—

And sure I think this fruit is hung too  
 high

For any mouth to gape for save a  
 queen's—

Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you  
 gone,

Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
 And while she made her ready for her  
 ride,

Her father's latest word humm'd in her  
 ear,

'Being so very wilful you must go,'

And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,  
 'Being so very wilful you must die.'

But she was happy enough and shook it  
 off,

As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;  
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,

'What matter, so I help him back to life?'

Then far away with good Sir Torre for  
 guide

Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless  
 downs

To Camelot, and before the city-gates

Came on her brother with a happy face

Making a roan horse caper and curvet

For pleasure all about a field of flowers:

Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she  
 cried, 'Lavaine,

How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He  
 amazed,

'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir  
 Lancelot!

How know ye my lord's name is Lance-  
 lot?'

But when the maid had told him all her  
 tale,

Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his  
 moods

Left them, and under the strange-statued  
 gate,

Where Arthur's wars were render'd  
 mystically,

Past up the still rich city to his kin,

His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot ;  
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves : there first she saw the casque  
 Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,  
 Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made them move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,  
 ' Your prize the diamond sent you by the King ' :  
 His eyes glisten'd : she fancied ' Is it for me ? '  
 And when the maid had told him all the tale  
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.  
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
 ' Alas,' he said, ' your ride hath wearied you.  
 Rest must you have.' ' No rest for me,' she said ;

' Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'  
 What might she mean by that ? his large black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
 In the heart's colours on her simple face ;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplex in mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more ;  
 But did not love the colour ; woman's love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,  
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;  
 There bode the night : but woke with dawn, and past  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
 Thence to the cave : so day by day she past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
 And likewise many a night : and Lancelot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
 Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid  
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
 Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's first fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
 Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
 The simples and the science of that time,  
 Told him that her fine care had saved his life.  
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,  
 Would listen for her coming and regret

Her parting step, and held her tenderly,  
And loved her with all love except the  
love

Of man and woman when they love their  
best,

Closest and sweetest, and had died the  
death

In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
And peradventure had he seen her first  
She might have made this and that other  
world

Another world for the sick man ; but now  
The shackles of an old love straiten'd  
him,

His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-  
ness made

Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
These, as but born of sickness, could not  
live :

For when the blood ran lustier in him  
again,

Full often the bright image of one face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
grace

Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd  
not,

Or short and coldly, and she knew right  
well

What the rough sickness meant, but what  
this meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd  
her sight,

And drave her ere her time across the  
fields

Far into the rich city, where alone  
She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain : it cannot  
be.

He will not love me : how then ? must  
I die ?'

Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few  
notes,

Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid

Went half the night repeating, 'Must I  
die ?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to  
left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest ;  
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,

'death or him,'  
Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt  
was whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three.

There morn by morn, arraying her sweet  
self

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd  
her best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she  
thought

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of  
him

For her own self or hers ; 'and do not  
shun

To speak the wish most near to your true  
heart ;

Such service have ye done me, that I make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord  
am I

In mine own land, and what I will I can.'

Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
But like a ghost without the power to  
speak.

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her  
wish,

And bode among them yet a little space  
Till he should learn it ; and one morn it  
chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,  
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your  
wish,

Seeing I go to-day' : then out she brake :

'Going ? and we shall never see you more.  
And I must die for want of one bold word.'

'Speak : that I live to hear,' he said, 'is  
yours.'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke :  
'I have gone mad. I love you : let me  
die.'

'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'

And innocently extending her white arms,  
'Your love,' she said, 'your love—to be your wife.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :  
But now there never will be wife of mine.'

'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,

But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the world,  
the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue

To blare its own interpretation—nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.' And she said,

'Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
Alas for me then, my good days are done.'

'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay !

This is not love : but love's first flash in youth,

Most common : yea, I know it of mine own self :

And you yourself will smile at your own self

Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life

To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age :

And then will I, for true you are and sweet

Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight be poor,

Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,

So that would make you happy : further—  
more,

Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,

In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied :

'Of all this will I nothing' ; and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew

Their talk had pierced, her father : 'Ay, a flash,

I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.

I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,  
'That were against me : what I can I will' ;

And there that day remain'd, and toward even

Sent for his shield : full meekly rose the maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield ;

Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,

Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd

Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.

And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound ;

And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.

And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,

Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :  
His very shield was gone ; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.

But still she heard him, still his picture  
form'd

And grew between her and the pictured  
wall.

Then came her father, saying in low tones,  
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted  
quietly.

Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace  
to thee,

Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all  
calm.

But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant  
field

Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ;  
the owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she  
mixt

Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little  
song,

And call'd her song 'The Song of Love  
and Death,'

And sang it : sweetly could she make  
and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain,  
in vain ;

And sweet is death who puts an end to  
pain :

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter  
death must be :

Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to  
me.

O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to  
fade away,

Sweet death, that seems to make us love-  
less clay,

I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could  
be ;

I needs must follow death, who calls for  
me ;

Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her voice,  
and this,

All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard,  
and thought

With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of  
the house

That ever shrieks before a death,' and  
call'd

The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red light  
of dawn

Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let  
me die !'

As when we dwell upon a word we  
know,

Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and  
thought

'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and  
lay,

Speaking a still good-morrow with her  
eyes.

At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yester-  
night

I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the  
woods,

And when ye used to take me with the  
flood

Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it : there ye fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.

And yet I cried because ye would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the King.

And yet ye would not ; but this night I  
dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, "Now shall I have my  
will" :

And there I woke, but still the wish  
remain'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King.



There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at  
me;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at  
me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse  
at me;  
Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells to  
me,  
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bad me  
one:  
And there the King will know me and  
my love,  
And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest!’

‘Peace,’ said her father, ‘O my child,  
ye seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours to  
go  
So far, being sick? and wherefore would  
ye look  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns  
all?’

Then the rough Torre began to heave  
and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,  
‘I never loved him: an I meet with  
him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him  
down,  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him  
dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the  
house.’

To whom the gentle sister made reply,  
‘Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be  
wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot’s fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the  
highest.’

‘Highest?’ the father answer’d, echoing  
‘highest?’  
(He meant to break the passion in her)  
‘nay,

Daughter, I know not what you call the  
highest;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If this be high, what is it to be low?’

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
‘Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger: these are slanders: never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain: so let me  
pass,

My father, howsoever I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God’s best  
And greatest, tho’ my love had no return:  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own  
desire;

For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner; wherefore  
cease,  
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and  
die.’

So when the ghostly man had come and  
gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word; and when he  
ask’d

‘Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?  
Then will I bear it gladly’; she replied,  
‘For Lancelot and the Queen and all the  
world,

But I myself must bear it.’ Then he wrote  
The letter she devised; which being writ  
And folded, ‘O sweet father, tender and  
true,

Deny me not,’ she said—‘ye never yet  
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
My latest: lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my  
heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died

For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the  
Queen's

For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own  
self,

And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the  
doors.'

She ceased: her father promised;  
whereupon

She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her  
death

Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the  
eleventh

Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from  
underground,

Then, those two brethren slowly with bent  
brows

Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that  
shone

Full-summer, to that stream whereon the  
barge,

Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
Theresat the lifelong creature of the house,  
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
So those two brethren from the chariot took  
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to  
her

'Sister, farewell for ever,' and again

'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the  
dead,

Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with  
the flood—

In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter—all her bright hair streaming  
down—

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in  
white

All but her face, and that clear-featured  
face

Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
craved

Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and  
blow,

With deaths of others, and almost his  
own,

The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for  
he saw

One of her house, and sent him to the  
Queen

Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
agreed

With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but  
that he,

Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her  
feet

For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
walls,

And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the  
stream,

They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd,  
'Queen,

Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making  
them

An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the  
swan's

Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:

Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin  
in words

Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my  
Queen,

I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and  
wife,

Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect: let rumours be:  
When did not rumours fly? these, as I  
trust

That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away,  
the Queen

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them  
off,

Till all the place whereon she stood was  
green;

Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive  
hand

Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the  
Lake.

Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,

It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and  
wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are  
these?

Diamonds for me! they had been thrice  
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your  
own.

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys  
apart.

I doubt not that however changed, you  
keep

So much of what is graceful: and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of  
courtesy

In which as Arthur's Queen I move and  
rule:

So cannot speak my mind. An end to  
this!

A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her, she shines  
me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the  
Queen's

Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers  
not mine—

Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my  
will—

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide  
for heat,

Flung them, and down they flash'd, and  
smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as  
it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past  
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half  
disdain

At love, life, all things, on the window  
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right  
across

Where these had fallen, slowly past the  
barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst  
away

To weep and wail in secret; and the  
barge,

On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.

There two stood arm'd, and kept the  
 door ; to whom,  
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
 Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes  
 that ask'd

'What is it?' but that oarsman's haggard  
 face,

As hard and still as is the face that men  
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
 rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and  
 they said,

'He is enchanted, cannotspeak—and she,  
 Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen,  
 so fair !

Yea, but how pale ! what are they ?' flesh  
 and blood ?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland ?  
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
 But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the King,  
 the King

Came girt with knights : then turn'd the  
 tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and  
 rose

And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
 So Arthur had the meek Sir Percivale  
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;  
 And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd  
 at her,

And Lancelot later came and mused at  
 her,

And last the Queen herself, and pitied  
 her :

But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ;  
 this was all :

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the  
 Lake,

I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
 Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
 Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
 I loved you, and my love had no return,  
 And therefore my true love has been my  
 death.

And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,

And to all other ladies, I make moan :  
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
 As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read ;  
 And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
 Wept, looking often from his face who  
 read

To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking that  
 her lips,

Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them  
 all :

'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that  
 hear,

Know that for this most gentle maiden's  
 death

Right heavy am I ; for good she was and  
 true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love  
 In women, whomsoever I have known.

Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;  
 Not at my years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I  
 gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love :  
 To this I call my friends in testimony,

Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
 Besought me to be plain and blunt, and  
 use,

To break her passion, some discourtesy  
 Against my nature : what I could, I did.

I left her and I bad her no farewell ;  
 Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would

have died,

I might have put my wits to some rough  
 use,

And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen  
 (Sea was her wrath, yet working after  
 storm)

'Ye might at least have done her so  
 much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from  
 her death.'

He raised his head, their eyes met and  
 hers fell,

He adding,  
 'Queen, she would not be content  
 Save that I wedded her, which could not  
 be.  
 Then might she follow me thro' the world,  
 she ask'd ;  
 It could not be. I told her that her love  
 Was but the flash of youth, would darken  
 down  
 To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
 Toward one more worthy of her—then  
 would I,  
 More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
 Estate them with large land and territory  
 In mine own realm beyond the narrow  
 seas,  
 To keep them in all joyance : more than  
 this  
 I could not ; this she would not, and she  
 died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O my  
 knight,  
 It will be to thy worship, as my knight,  
 And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
 To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in  
 all the realm  
 Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
 The marshall'd Order of their Table  
 Round,  
 And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
 The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
 Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
 And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.  
 And when the knights had laid her comely  
 head  
 Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
 Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let  
 her tomb  
 Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
 And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
 Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
 And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
 In letters gold and azure !' which was  
 wrought  
 Thereafter ; but when now the lords and  
 dames

And people, from the high dōor stream-  
 ing, brake  
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved  
 apart,  
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,  
 'Lancelot,  
 Forgive me ; mine was jealousy in love.'  
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
 'That is love's curse ; pass on, my Queen,  
 forgiven.'  
 But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
 Approach'd him, and with full affection  
 said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom  
 I have  
 Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
 What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
 And many a time have watch'd thee at  
 the tilt  
 Strike down the lusty and long practised  
 knight,  
 And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
 To win his honour and to make his name,  
 And loved thy courtesies and thèe, a man  
 Made to be loved ; but now I would to  
 God,  
 Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,  
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
 shaped, it seems,  
 By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
 If one may judge the living by the dead,  
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
 Who might have brought thee, now a  
 lonely man  
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
 Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the  
 Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she was,  
 my King,  
 Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
 To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
 To doubt her pureness were to want a  
 heart—  
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
 Could bind him, but free love will not be  
 bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said  
the King.  
'Let love be free; free love is for the  
best :  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee  
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but  
he went,  
And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her  
moving down,  
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself, 'Ah simple heart and  
sweet,  
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for  
thy soul?  
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at  
last—  
Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love"?  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous  
pride?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and  
fame  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to  
me?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming a  
reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Caught from his mother's arms—the  
wondrous one  
Who passes thro' the vision of the night—  
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and  
morn  
She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair,  
my child,  
As a king's son," and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er  
it be !

For what am I? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and  
have it :  
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;  
Now grown a part of me : but what use in  
it?  
To make men worse by making my sin  
known?  
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must  
break  
These bonds that so defame me: not  
without  
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,  
Who knows? but if I would not, then  
may God,  
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten  
mere,  
Among the tumbled fragments of the  
hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful  
pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

### THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess  
done  
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd  
The Pure,  
Had pass'd into the silent life of prayer,  
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for  
the cowl  
The helmet in an abbey far away  
From Camelot, there, and not long after,  
died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,  
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the  
rest,  
And honour'd him, and wrought into his  
heart  
A way by love that waken'd love within,  
To answer that which came: and as they  
sat



Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening  
half

The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
That puff'd the swaying branches into  
smoke

Above them, ere the summer when he  
died,

The monk Ambrosius question'd Per-  
civale :

‘O brother, I have seen this yew-tree  
smoke,

Spring after spring, for half a hundred  
years :

For never have I known the world with-  
out,

Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but  
thee,

When first thou camest—such a courtesy  
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice—  
I knew

For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall ;  
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,  
Some true, some light, but everyone of you  
Stamp'd with the image of the King ; and  
now

Tell me, what drove thee from the Table  
Round,

My brother ? was it earthly passion crost ?’

‘Nay,’ said the knight ; ‘for no such  
passion mine.

But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail  
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,  
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle  
out

Among us in the jousts, while women  
watch

Who wins, who falls ; and waste the  
spiritual strength

Within us, better offer'd up to Heaven.’

To whom the monk : ‘The Holy  
Grail !—I trust

We are green in Heaven's eyes ; but here  
too much

We moulder—as to things without I  
mean—

Yet one of your own knights, a guest of  
ours,

Told us of this in our refectory, •

But spake with such a sadness and so low  
We heard not half of what he said. What  
is it ?

The phantom of a cup that comes and  
goes ?’

‘Nay, monk ! what phantom ?’ answer'd  
Percivale.

‘The cup, the cup itself, from which our  
Lord

Drank at the last sad supper with his  
own.

This, from the blessed land of Aromat—  
After the day of darkness, when the dead  
Went wandering o'er Moriah—the good  
saint

Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought  
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our  
Lord.

And there awhile it bode ; and if a man  
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at  
once,

By faith, of all his ills. But then the times  
Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
Was caught away to Heaven, and dis-  
appear'd.’

To whom the monk : ‘From our old  
books I know

That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,  
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,  
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
build ;

And there he built with wattles from the  
marsh

A little lonely church in days of yore,  
For so they say, these books of ours, but  
seem

Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.  
But who first saw the holy thing to-day ?’

‘A woman,’ answer'd Percivale, ‘a  
nun,

And one no further off in blood from me  
Than sister ; and if ever holy maid

With knees of adoration wore the stone,  
A holy maid ; tho' never maiden glow'd,  
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,  
With such a fervent flame of human  
love,

Which being rudely blunted, glanced and shot

Only to holy things ; to prayer and praise  
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,

Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,  
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,  
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,

Across the iron grating of her cell  
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what

Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,  
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
And each of these a hundred winters old,  
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made

His Table Round, and all men's hearts became

Clean for a season, surely he had thought  
That now the Holy Grail would come again ;

But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,

And heal the world of all their wickedness !  
"O Father !" ask'd the maiden, "might it come

To me by prayer and fasting?" "Nay," said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."

And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun  
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought

She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.

And when she came to speak, behold her eyes

Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,  
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,  
Beautiful in the light of holiness.

And "O my brother Percivale," she said,

"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail :

For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound

As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use

To hunt by moonlight'; and the slender sound

As from a distance beyond distance grew  
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,  
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,

Was like that music as it came ; and then  
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,

And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,

Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,  
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed

With rosy colours leaping on the wall ;  
And then the music faded, and the Grail  
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.  
So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,

And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,

That so perchance the vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this

To all men ; and myself fasted and pray'd

Always, and many among us many a week  
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

'And one there was among us, ever moved

Among us in white armour, Galahad.  
"God make thee good as thou art beautiful,"

Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight ;  
and none,

In so young youth, was ever made a knight

Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard

My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;  
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd

Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

'Sister or brother none had he; but some

Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said

Begotten by enchantment — chatteringers they,

Like birds of passage piping up and down,  
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come;

For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away

Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair

Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;

And out of this she plaited broad and long  
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread

And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
A crimson grail within a silver beam;

And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,

Saying, "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,

O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,

I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.

Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,

And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king

Far in the spiritual city": and as she spake

She sent the deathless passion in her eyes  
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind

On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle: O brother,

In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,

Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
And carven with strange figures; and in and out

The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.

And Merlin call'd it "The Siege perilous,"

Perilous for good and ill; "for there," he said,

"No man could sit but he should lose himself":

And once by misadventure Merlin sat  
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
Cried, "If I lose myself, I save myself!"

'Then on a summer night it came to pass,

While the great banquet lay along the hall,

That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat, we heard

A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
And rending, and a blast, and overhead

Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
And in the blast there smote along the hall

A beam of light seven times more clear than day:

And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
And none might see who bare it, and it

past.

But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,

And staring each at other like dumb men  
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a

vow.

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
Because I had not seen the Grail, would

ride  
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
Until I found and saw it, as the nun

My sister saw it ; and Galahad sware the  
vow,  
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin,  
sware,  
And Lancelot sware, and many among  
the knights,  
And Gawain sware, and louder than the  
rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrósius, asking him,  
'What said the King? Did Arthur take  
the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,  
'the King,  
Was not in hall : for early that same day,  
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,  
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
Crying on help : for all her shining hair  
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky  
arm  
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all  
she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
In tempest : so the King arose and went  
To smoke the scandalous hive of those  
wild bees

That made such honey in his realm.  
Howbeit

Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
Returning o'er the plain that then began  
To darken under Camelot ; whence the  
King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there !  
the roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-  
smoke !

Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the  
bolt."

For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
As having there so oft with all his knights  
Feasted, and as the stateliest under  
heaven.

'O brother, had you known our mighty  
hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago !  
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,

By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing  
brook,  
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin  
built.

And four great zones of sculpture, set  
betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall :  
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
And on the fourth are men with growing  
wings,

And over all one statue in the mould  
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern  
Star.

And eastward fronts the statue, and the  
crown

And both the wings are made of gold,  
and flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
Behold it, crying, "We have still a King."

'And, brother, had you known our hall  
within,  
Broader and higher than any in all the  
lands !

Where twelve great windows blazon  
Arthur's wars,

And all the light that falls upon the board  
Streams thro' the twelve great battles of  
our King.

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount  
and mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
And blank : and who shall blazon it?  
when and how?—

O there, perchance, when all our wars are  
done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

'So to this hall full quickly rode the  
King,

In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish,  
wrapt

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.

And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw  
The golden dragon sparkling over all :  
And many of those who burnt the hold,  
their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with  
smoke, and sear'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,  
Full of the vision, prest : and then the  
King

Spake to me, being nearest, "Percivale,"  
(Because the hall was all in tumult—some  
Vowing, and some protesting), "what is  
this?"

'O brother, when I told him what had  
chanced,

My sister's vision, and the rest, his face  
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than  
once,

When some brave deed seem'd to be done  
in vain,

Darken ; and "Woe is me, my knights,"  
he cried,

"Had I been here, ye had not sworn  
the vow."

Bold was mine answer. "Had thyself  
been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn."  
"Yea, yea," said he,

"Art thou so bold and hast not seen the  
Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I  
saw the light,

But since I did not see the Holy Thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by  
knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as  
one :

"Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn  
our vows."

"Lo now," said Arthur, "have ye  
seen a cloud?

What go ye into the wilderness to see?"

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in  
a voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, call'd,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—  
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me.'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the  
King, "for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.  
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign—  
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she—  
A sign to main this Order which I made.  
But ye, that follow but the leader's bell"  
(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights)

"Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb will  
sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne  
Five knights at once, and every younger  
knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns—and ye,  
What are ye? Galahads?—no, nor  
Percivales"

(For thus it pleased the King to range  
me close

After Sir Galahad); "nay," said he,  
"but men

With strength and will to right the  
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,  
Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood—

But one hath seen, and all the blind will  
see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made :

Yet—for ye know the cries of all my  
realm

Pass thro' this hall—how often, O my  
knights,

Your places being vacant at my side,  
This chance of noble deeds will come  
and go

Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering  
fires

Lost in the quagmire ! Many of you, yea  
most,

Return no more : ye think I show myself

Too dark a prophet : come now, let us  
meet  
The morrow morn once more in one full  
field  
Of gracious pastime, that once more the  
King,  
Before ye leave him for this Quest, may  
count  
The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
knights,  
Rejoicing in that Order which he made."

'So when the sun broke next from  
underground,  
All the great table of our Arthur closed  
And clash'd in such a tourney and so full,  
So many lances broken—never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since Arthur  
came ;  
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
So many knights that all the people cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their  
heat,  
Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Perci-  
vale !"

'But when the next day brake from  
underground—  
O brother, had you known our Camelot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so old  
The King himself had fears that it would  
fall,  
So strange, and rich, and dim ; for where  
the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the sky,  
Met foreheads all along the street of those  
Who watch'd us pass ; and lower, and  
where the long  
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the  
necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers  
of flowers  
Fell as we past ; and men and boys astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
At all the corners, named us each by  
name,  
Calling "God speed !" but in the ways  
below

The knights and ladies wept, and rich  
and poor  
Wept, and the King himself could hardly  
speak  
For grief, and all in middle street the  
Queen,  
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and shriek'd  
aloud,  
"This madness has come on us for our  
sins."  
So to the Gate of the three Queens we  
came,  
Where Arthur's wars are render'd mys-  
tically,  
And thence departed every one his way.

'And I was lifted up in heart, and  
thought  
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down  
the knights,  
So many and famous names ; and never  
yet  
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor earth  
so green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I  
knew  
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of our  
King,  
That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my  
mind.  
Then every evil word I had spoken once,  
And every evil thought I had thought of  
old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, "This Quest is not for  
thee."  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself  
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto death ;  
And I, too, cried, "This Quest is not for  
thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought  
my thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then  
a brook,



With one sharp rapid, wheré the crisping  
white

Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,  
And took both ear and eye ; and o'er the  
brook

Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook  
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will rest  
here,"

I said, "I am not worthy of the Quest";  
But even while I drank the brook, and ate  
The goodly apples, all these things at once  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

'And then behold a woman at a door  
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she  
sat,

And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,  
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose  
Opening her arms to meet me, as who  
should say,

"Rest here"; but when I touch'd her,  
lo! she, too,

Fell into dust and nothing, and the house  
Became no better than a broken shed,  
And in it a dead babe; and also this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was my  
thirst.

Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the  
world,

And where it smote the plowshare in the  
field,

The plowman left his plowing, and fell  
down

Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,  
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell  
down

Before it, and I knew not why, but  
thought

"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had risen.  
Then was I ware of one that on me moved  
In golden armour with a crown of gold  
About a casque all jewels; and his horse  
In golden armour jewell'd everywhere:

And on the splendour came, flashing me  
blind;

And seem'd to me the Lord of all the  
world,

Being so huge. But when-I thought he  
meant

To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,  
Open'd his arms to embrace me as he  
came,

And up I went and touch'd him, and he,  
too,

Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and  
thorns.

'And I rode on and found a mighty  
hill,

And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires  
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into  
heaven.

And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and  
these

Cried to me climbing, "Welcome, Perci-  
vale!

Thou mightiest and thou purest among  
men!"

And glad was I and clomb, but found at  
top

No man, nor any voice. And thence I  
past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there; but  
there I found

Only one man of an exceeding age.

"Where is that goodly company," said I,  
"That so cried out upon me?" and he  
had

Scarce any voice to answer, and yet  
gasp'd,

"Whence and what art thou?" and even  
as he spoke

Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried in  
grief,

"Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself  
And touch it, it will crumble into dust."

'And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,  
Low as the hill was high, and where the  
vale

Was lowest, found a chapel, and thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and he  
said:

' "O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all ;  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself

Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all  
is thine,'

And all her form shone forth with sudden  
light

So that the angels were amazed, and she  
Follow'd Him down, and like a flying  
star

Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the east ;  
But her thou hast not known : for what  
is this

Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy  
sins ?

Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself  
As Galahad." When the hermit made  
an end,

In silver armour suddenly Galahad shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter'd, and we knelt in  
prayer.

And there the hermit slaked my burning  
thirst,

And at the sacring of the mass I saw

The holy elements alone ; but he,

"Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw  
the Grail,

The Holy Grail, descend upon the  
shrine :

I saw the fiery face as of a child

That smote itself into the bread, and went ;

And hither am I come ; and never yet

Hath what thy sister taught me first to  
see,

This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor  
come

Cover'd, but moving with me night and  
day,

Fainter by day, but always in the night

Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd  
marsh

Blood-red, and on the naked mountain  
top

Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below

Blood-red. And in the strength of this  
I rode,

Shattering all evil customs everywhere,

And past thro' Pagan realms, and made  
them mine,

And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore  
them down,

And broke thro' all, and in the strength  
of this

Come victor. But my time is hard at  
hand,

And hence I go ; and one will crown me  
king

Far in the spiritual city ; and come thou,  
too,

For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

' While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling  
on mine,

Drew me, with power upon me, till I  
grew

One with him, to believe as he believed.

Then, when the day began to wane, we  
went.

' There rose a hill that none but man  
could climb,

Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water  
courses—

Storm at the top, and when we gain'd it,  
storm

Round us and death ; for every moment  
glanced

His silver arms and gloom'd : so quick  
and thick

The lightnings here and there to left and  
right

Struck, till the dry old trunks about us,  
dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,  
Sprang into fire : and at the base we found

On either hand, as far as eye could see,

A great black swamp and of an evil smell,  
Part black, part whiten'd with the bones

of men,  
Not to be crost, save that some ancient

king  
Had built a way, where, link'd with  
many a bridge,

A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.

And Galahad fled along them bridge by  
bridge,

And every bridge as quickly as he crost

Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
yearn'd

To follow; and thrice above him all the  
heavens

Open'd and blazed with thunder such as  
seem'd

Shoutings of all the sons of God: and first  
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,

In silver-shining armour starry-clear;

And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.

And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,

If boat it were—I saw not whence it came.

And when the heavens open'd and blazed  
again

Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—

And had he set the sail, or had the boat  
Become a living creature clad with wings?

And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung  
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,

For now I knew the veil had been with-  
drawn.

Then in a moment when they blazed again

Opening, I saw the least of little stars

Down on the waste, and straight beyond  
the star

I saw the spiritual city and all her spires

And gateways in a glory like one pearl—

No larger, tho' the goal of all the saints—

Strike down from the sea; and from the star  
there shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there

Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,

Which never eyes on earth again shall see.

Then fell the floods of heaven drowning  
the deep.

And how my feet recrost the deathful ridge

No memory in me lives; but that I touch'd

The chapel-doors at dawn I know; and  
thence

Taking my war-horse from the holy man,

Glad that no phantom vexed me more,  
return'd

To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
wars.'

'O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius,—'for  
in sooth

These ancient books—and they would win  
thee—teem,

Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
With miracles and marvels like to these,  
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,  
Who read but on my breviary with ease,  
Till my head swims; and then go forth  
and pass

Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,  
And almost plaster'd like a martin's nest  
To these old walls—and mingle with our  
folk;

And knowing every honest face of theirs  
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,  
And every homely secret in their hearts,  
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,  
And ills and aches, and teething, lyings-  
in,

And mirthful sayings, children of the place,  
That have no meaning half a league away:  
Or lulling random squabbles when they  
rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the market-  
cross,

Rejoice, small man, in this small world  
of mine,

Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs—

O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,

Came ye on none but phantoms in your  
quest,

No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale:

'All men, to one so bound by such a vow,  
And women were as phantoms. O, my  
brother,

Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee

How far I falter'd from my quest and vow?

For after I had lain so many nights,

A bedmate of the snail and eft and snake,

In grass and burdock, I was changed to  
wan

And meagre, and the vision had not  
come;

And then I chanced upon a goodly town

With one great dwelling in the middle  
of it;

Thither I made, and there was I disarm'd

By maidens each as fair as any flower:

But when they led me into hall, behold,

The Princess of that castle was the one,

Brother, and that one only, who had ever

Made my heart leap ; for when I moved  
of old

A slender page about her father's hall,  
And she a slender maiden, all my heart  
Went after her with longing : yet we  
twain

Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a vow.  
And now I came upon her once again,  
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,  
And all his land and wealth and state  
were hers.

And while I tarried, every day she set  
A banquet richer than the day before  
By me ; for all her longing and her will  
Was toward me as of old ; till one fair  
morn,

I walking to and fro beside a stream  
That flash'd across her orchard underneath  
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,  
And calling me the greatest of all knights,  
Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the first  
time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to me.  
Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
word,

That most of us would follow wandering  
fires,

And the Quest faded in my heart. Anon,  
The heads of all her people drew to me,  
With supplication both of knees and  
tongue :

"We have heard of thee : thou art our  
greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe :  
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."  
O me, my brother ! but one night my vow  
Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own  
self,

And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her ;  
Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
Cared not for her, nor anything upon  
earth.'

Then said the monk, 'Poor men, when  
yule is cold,  
Must be content to sit by little fires.  
And this am I, so that ye care for me  
Ever so little ; yea, and blest be Heaven

That brought thee here to this poor house  
of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to  
warm

My cold heart with a friend : but O the  
pity

To find thine own first love once more—  
to hold,

Hold her, a wealthy bride within thine  
arms,

Or all but hold, and then—cast her aside,  
Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.  
For we that want the warmth of double  
life,

We that are plagued with dreams of  
something sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich,—  
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthlywise,  
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
But live like an old badger in his earth,  
With earth about him everywhere, despite  
All fast and penance. Saw ye none be-  
side,

None of your knights ?'

'Yea so,' said Percivale :

'One night my pathway swerving east, I  
saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors  
All in the middle of the rising moon :  
And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him,  
and he me,

And each made joy of either ; then he  
ask'd,

"Where is he ? hast thou seen him—  
Lancelot ?—Once,"

Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across me  
—mad,

And maddening what he rode : and when  
I cried,

'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest  
So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not !  
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,  
For now there is a lion in the way.'  
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on  
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
Because his former madness, once the talk  
And scandal of our table, had return'd ;

For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship  
him

That ill to him is ill to them ; to Bors  
Beyond the rest : he well had been content  
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have  
seen,

The Holy Cup of healing ; and, indeed,  
Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
Small heart was his after the Holy Quest :  
If God would send the vision, well : if not,  
The Quest and he were in the hands of  
Heaven.

' And then, with small adventure met,  
Sir Bors

Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,  
And found a people there among their  
crag,

Our race and blood, a remnant that were  
left

Paynim amid their circles, and the stones  
They pitch up straight to heaven : and  
their wise men

Were strong in that old magic which can  
trace

The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at  
him

And this high Quest as at a simple thing :  
Told him he follow'd—almost Arthur's  
words—

A mocking fire : " what other fire than  
he,

Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom  
blows,

And the sea rolls, and all the world is  
warm'd ? "

And when his answer chafed them, the  
rough crowd,

Hearing he had a difference with their  
priests,

Seized him, and bound and plunged him  
into a cell

Of great piled stones ; and lying bounden  
there

In darkness thro' innumerable hours

He heard the hollow-ringing heavens  
sweep

Over him till by miracle—what else ?—  
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and  
fell,

Such as no wind could move :—and thro'  
the gap

Glimmer'd the streaming scud : then  
came a night

Still as the day was loud ; and thro' the  
gap

The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table  
Round—

For, brother, so one night, because they  
roll

Thro' such a round in heaven, we named  
the stars,

Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King—  
And these, like bright eyes of familiar  
friends,

In on him shone : " And then to me, to  
me,"

Said good Sir Bors, " beyond all hopes  
of mine,

Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for  
myself—

Across the seven clear stars—O grace to  
me—

In colour like the fingers of a hand  
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail  
Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd  
A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards, a  
maid,

Who kept our holy faith among her kin  
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

To whom the monk : ' And I remember  
now

That pelican on the casque : Sir Bors it  
was

Who spake so low and sadly at our board ;  
And mighty reverent at our grace was he :  
A square-set man and honest ; and his  
eyes,

An out-door sign of all the warmth within,  
Smiled with his lips—a smile beneath a  
cloud,

But heaven had meant it for a sunny one :  
Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else ? But when  
ye reach'd

The city, found ye all your knights re-  
turn'd,

Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,  
Tell me, and what said each, and what  
the King ?'

Then answer'd Percivale : 'And that  
can I,  
Brother, and truly ; since the living words  
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King  
Pass not from door to door and out again,  
But sit within the house. O, when we  
reach'd  
The city, our horses stumbling as they  
trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cocka-  
trices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left the  
stones  
Raw, that they fell from, brought us to  
the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the daïs-  
throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the  
Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of  
them,  
And those that had not, stood before the  
King,  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bad  
me hail,  
Saying, "A welfare in thine eye reproves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding ford.  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late  
Among the strange devices of our kings ;  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of  
ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded for  
us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing ; but now—  
the Quest,  
This vision—hast thou seen the Holy Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to Glaston-  
bury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast  
heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt resolve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turning,  
ask'd  
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this Quest for  
thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not for  
such as I.

Therefore I communed with a saintly man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not  
for me ;

For I was much aweared of the Quest :  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it ; and then this  
gale

Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all about  
With all discomfort ; yea, and but for this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant  
to me."

'He ceased ; and Arthur turn'd to  
whom at first

He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd

Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught  
his hand,

Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,  
stood,

Until the King espied him, saying to him,  
"Hail, Bors ! if ever loyal man and true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail" ;  
and Bors,

"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it :  
I saw it" ; and the tears were in his eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lancelot, for  
the rest

Spake but of sundry perils in the storm ;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the last ;

"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the  
King, "my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for  
thee?"

"Our mightiest !" answer'd Lancelot,  
with a groan ;

"O King !"—and when he paused,  
methought I spied

A dying fire of madness in his eyes—

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,  
Happier are those that welter in their sin,  
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
slime,

Slime of the ditch : but in me lived a sin  
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,



Noble, and knightly in me twined and  
 clung  
 Round that one sin, until the wholesome  
 flower  
 And poisonous grew together, each as  
 each,  
 Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when thy  
 knights  
 Sware, I sware with them only in the hope  
 That could I touch or see the Holy Grail  
 They might be pluck'd asunder. Then I  
 spake  
 To one most holy saint, who wept and  
 said,  
 That save they could be pluck'd asunder,  
 all  
 My quest were but in vain; to whom I  
 vow'd  
 That I would work according as he will'd.  
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd  
 and strove  
 To tear the twain asunder in my heart,  
 My madness came upon me as of old,  
 And whipt me into waste fields far away;  
 There was I beaten down by little men,  
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of  
 my sword  
 And shadow of my spear had been enow  
 To scare them from me once; and then  
 I came  
 All in my folly to the naked shore,  
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
 grasses grew;  
 But such a blast, my King, began to blow,  
 So loud a blast along the shore and sea,  
 Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,  
 Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all the  
 sea  
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
 Swept like a river, and the clouded  
 heavens  
 Were shaken with the motion and the  
 sound.  
 And blackening in the sea-foam sway'd a  
 boat,  
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a  
 chain;  
 And in my madness to myself I said,  
 'I will embark and I will lose myself,  
 And in the great sea wash away my sin.'

I burst the chain, I sprang into the boat.  
 Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,  
 And with me drove the moon and all the  
 stars;  
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
 night  
 I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,  
 And felt the boat shock earth, and looking  
 up,  
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-  
 bonek,  
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
 With chasm-like portals open to the sea,  
 And steps that met the breaker! there  
 was none  
 Stood near it but a lion on each side  
 That kept the entry, and the moon was  
 full.  
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up the  
 stairs.  
 There drew my sword. With sudden-  
 flaring manes  
 Those two great beasts rose upright like  
 a man,  
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood  
 between;  
 And, when I would have smitten them,  
 heard a voice,  
 'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt,  
 the beasts  
 Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with  
 violence  
 The sword was dash'd from out my hand,  
 and fell.  
 And up into the sounding hall I past;  
 But nothing in the sounding hall I saw,  
 No bench nor table, painting on the wall  
 Or shield of knight; only the rounded  
 moon  
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
 But always in the quiet house I heard,  
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost  
 tower  
 To the eastward: up I climb'd a thousand  
 steps  
 With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to  
 climb  
 For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,  
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,

'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord  
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail.'  
Then in my madness I essay'd the door ;  
It gave ; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
away—

O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
All pall'd in crimson samite, and around  
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings  
and eyes.

And but for all my madness and my sin,  
And then my swooning, I had sworn I  
saw

That which I saw ; but what I saw was  
veil'd

And cover'd ; and this Quest was not for  
me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing, Lance-  
lot left

The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—nay,  
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish  
words,—

A reckless and irreverent knight was he,  
Now bolden'd by the silence of his  
King,—

Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my  
liege," he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of  
thine?

When have I stinted stroke in foughten  
field?

But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,  
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men  
mad,

Yea, made our mightiest madder than  
our least.

But by mine eyes and by mine ears I  
swear,

I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,  
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,  
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,  
"Gawain, and blinder unto holy things  
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,  
Being too blind to have desire to see.

But if indeed there came a sign from  
heaven,

Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,  
For these have seen according to their  
sight.

For every fiery prophet in old times,  
And all the sacred madness of the bard,  
When God made music thro' them, could  
but speak

His music by the framework and the  
chord ;

And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot :  
never yet

Could all of true and noble in knight and  
man

Twine round one sin, whatever it might  
be,

With such a closeness, but apart there  
grew,

Save that he were the swine thou spakest  
of,

Some root of knighthood and pure noble-  
ness ;

Whereto see thou, that it may bear its  
flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my  
knights?

Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,  
That most of them would follow wan-  
dering fires,

Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me and  
gone,

And left me gazing at a barren board,  
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a  
tith—

And out of those to whom the vision came  
My greatest hardly will believe he saw ;  
Another hath beheld it afar off,  
And leaving human wrongs to right them-  
selves,

Cares but to pass into the silent life.

And one hath had the vision face to  
face,

And now his chair desires him here in  
vain,

However they may crown him elsewhere.

“And some among you held, that if  
the King  
Had seen the sight he would have sworn  
the vow :  
Not easily, seeing that the King must  
guard  
That which he rules, and is but as the hind  
To whom a space of land is given to  
plow.  
Who may not wander from the allotted  
field  
Before his work be done ; but, being done,  
Let visions of the night or of the day  
Come, as they will ; and many a time  
they come,  
Until this earth he walks on seems not  
earth,  
This light that strikes his eyeball is not  
light,  
This air that smites his forehead is not air  
But vision—yea, his very hand and foot—  
In moments when he feels he cannot die,  
And knows himself no vision to himself,  
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One  
Who rose again : ye have seen what ye  
have seen.”

‘So spake the King : I knew not all  
he meant.’

### PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to fill  
the gap  
Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he sat  
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors  
Were softly sunder’d, and thro’ these a  
youth,  
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields  
Past, and the sunshine came along with  
him.

‘Make me thy knight, because I know,  
Sir King,  
All that belongs to knighthood, and I love.’  
Such was his cry : for having heard the  
King  
Had let proclaim a tournament—the prize  
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won

The golden circlet, for himself the sword :  
And there were those who knew him near  
the King,  
And promised for him : and Arthur made  
him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the  
isles—

But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was he—  
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,  
Across the forest call’d of Dean, to find  
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun  
Beat like a strong knight on his helm,  
and reel’d

Almost to falling from his horse ; but  
saw

Near him a mound of even-sloping side,  
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,  
And here and there great hollies under  
them ;

But for a mile all round was open space,  
And fern and heath : and slowly Pelleas  
drew

To that dim day, then binding his good  
horse

To a tree, cast himself down ; and as he  
lay

At random looking over the brown earth  
Thro’ that green-glooming twilight of the  
grove,

It seem’d to Pelleas that the fern without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,  
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.  
Then o’er it crost the dimness of a cloud  
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird  
Flying, and then a fawn ; and his eyes  
closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but no  
maid

In special, half-awake he whisper’d,  
‘Where ?

O where ? I love thee, tho’ I know thee  
not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,  
And I will make thee with my spear and  
sword

As famous—O my Queen, my Guinevere,  
For I will be thine Arthur when we  
meet.’

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk  
And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,  
Strange as to some old prophet might  
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colours like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken  
stood :

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and one  
that,  
Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,  
And loosed his horse, and led him to the  
light.

There she that seem'd the chief among  
them said,

'In happy time behold our pilot-star !  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we ride,  
Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the knights  
There at Caerleon, but have lost our way :  
To right ? to left ? straight forward ? back  
again ?

Which ? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,  
'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful ?'  
For large her violet eyes look'd, and her  
bloom

A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in woman-  
hood ;

And slender was her hand and small her  
shape ;

And but for those large eyes, the haunts  
of scorn,

She might have seem'd a toy to trifle with,  
And pass and care no more. But while  
he gazed

The beauty of her flesh abash'd the boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul :  
For as the base man, judging of the good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by default  
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
All the young beauty of his own soul to  
hers,

Believing her ; and when she spake to  
him,

Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
reply.

For out of the waste islands had he come,  
Wheresaving his own sisters he had known  
Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and scream'd  
against the gulls,

Makers of nets, and living from the sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady  
round

And look'd upon her people ; and as when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn,  
The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her com-  
pany.

Three knights were thereamong ; and they  
too smiled,

Scorning him ; for the lady was Ettarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, 'O wild and of the  
woods,

Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
speech ?

Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair  
face,

Lacking a tongue ?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,  
'I woke from dreams ; and coming out  
of gloom

Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
crave

Pardon : but will ye to Caerleon ? I  
Go likewise : shall I lead you to the King ?'

'Lead then,' she said ; and thro' the  
woods they went.

And while they rode, the meaning in his  
eyes,

His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,  
His broken utterances and bashfulness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her  
heart

She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a fool,  
Raw, yet so stale !' But since her mind  
was bent

On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name

And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the lists  
Cried—and beholding him so strong, she  
thought

That peradventure he will fight for me,  
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd  
him,

Being so gracious, that he wellnigh deem'd  
His wish by hers was echo'd; and her  
knights

And all her damsels too were gracious to  
him,

For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd  
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging, she,  
Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,'  
she said,

'See! look at mine! but wilt thou fight  
for me,

And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart  
Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay! wilt thou if I  
win?'

'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and she  
laugh'd,

And straitly nipt the hand, and flung it  
from her;

Then glanced askew at those three knights  
of hers,

Till all her ladies laugh'd along with her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas, 'all,  
meseems,

Are happy; I the happiest of them all.'  
Nor slept that night for pleasure in his  
blood,

And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
the leaves;

Then being on the morrow knighted,  
sware

To love one only. And as he came away,  
The men who met him rounded on their  
heels

And wonder'd after him, because his face  
Shone like the countenance of a priest of  
old

Against the flame about a sacrifice  
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad  
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets, and  
strange knights

From the four winds came in: and each  
one sat,

Tho' served with choice from air, land,  
stream, and sea,

Oft in mid-banquet measuring with his  
eyes

His neighbour's make and might: and  
Pelleas look'd

Noble among the noble, for he dream'd  
His lady loved him, and he knew himself

Loved of the King: and him his new-  
made knight

Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved  
him more

Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

Then blush'd and brake the morning  
of the jousts,

And this was call'd 'The Tournament of  
Youth':

For Arthur, loving his young knight,  
withheld

His older and his mightier from the lists,  
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's love,

According to her promise, and remain  
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had

the jousts

Down in the flat field by the shore of Usk  
Holden: the gilded parapets were crown'd

With faces, and the great tower fill'd with  
eyes

Up to the summit, and the trumpets blew.  
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the

field

With honour: so by that strong hand of  
his

The sword and golden circlet were  
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved:  
the heat

Of pride and glory fired her face; her eye  
Sparkled; she caught the circlet from his

lance,

And there before the people crown'd  
herself:

So for the last time she was gracious to  
him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her look  
 Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
 knight—  
 Linger'd Ettarre: and seeing Pelleas  
 droop,  
 Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee  
 much,  
 O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
 To him who won thee glory!' And she  
 said,  
 'Had ye not held your Lancelot in your  
 bower,  
 My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat  
 the Queen,  
 As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
 Glanced down upon her, turn'd and went  
 her way.

But after, when her damsels, and her-  
 self,  
 And those three knights all set their  
 faces home,  
 Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw him  
 cried,  
 'Damsels—and yet I should be shamed  
 to say it—  
 I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back  
 Among yourselves. Would rather that  
 we had  
 Some rough old knight who knew the  
 worldly way,  
 Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride  
 And jest with: take him to you, keep  
 him off,  
 And pamper him with papmeat, if ye will,  
 Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
 Such as the wholesome mothers tell their  
 boys.  
 Nay, should ye try him with a merry one  
 To find his mettle, good: and if he fly  
 us,  
 Small matter! let him.' This her  
 damsels heard,  
 And mindful of her small and cruel hand,  
 They, closing round him thro' the journey  
 home,  
 Acted her hest, and always from her side  
 Restrain'd him with all manner of device,  
 So that he could not come to speech  
 with her.

And when she gain'd her castle, upsprang  
 the bridge,  
 Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
 groove,  
 And he was left alone in open field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pelleas  
 thought,  
 'To those who love them, trials of our  
 faith.  
 Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
 For loyal to the uttermost am I.'  
 So made his moan; and, darkness falling,  
 sought  
 A priory not far off, there lodged, but  
 rose  
 With morning every day, and, moist or  
 dry,  
 Full-arm'd upon his charger all day long  
 Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to  
 him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn  
 to wrath.  
 Then calling her three knights, she  
 charged them, 'Out!  
 And drive him from the walls.' And out  
 they came,  
 But Pelleas overthrew them as they  
 dash'd  
 Against him one by one; and these  
 return'd,  
 But still he kept his watch beneath the  
 wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;  
 and once,  
 A week beyond, while walking on the  
 walls  
 With her three knights, she pointed  
 downward, 'Look,  
 He haunts me—I cannot breathe—be-  
 sieges me;  
 Down! strike him! put my hate into  
 your strokes,  
 And drive him from my walls.' And  
 down they went,  
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by one;  
 And from the tower above him cried  
 Ettarre,  
 'Bind him, and bring him in.'



He heard her voice ;  
Then let the strong hand, which had  
    overthrown  
Her minion-knights, by those he over-  
    threw  
Be bounden straight, and so they brought  
    him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,  
    the sight  
Of her rich beauty made him at one  
    glance  
More bondsman in his heart than in his  
    bonds.  
Yet with good cheer he spake, 'Behold  
    me, Lady,  
A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will ;  
And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,  
Content am I so that I see thy face  
But once a day : for I have sworn my  
    vows,  
And thou hast given thy promise, and I  
    know  
That all these pains are trials of my faith,  
And that thyself, when thou hast seen me  
    strain'd  
And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
Yield me thy love and know me for thy  
    knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
With all her damsels, he was stricken  
    mute ;  
But when she mock'd his vows and the  
    great King,  
Lighted on words : 'For pity of thine  
    own self,  
Peace, Lady, peace : is he not thine and  
    mine ?'  
'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard his  
    voice  
But long'd to break away. Unbind him  
    now,  
And thrust him out of doors ; for save  
    he be  
Fool to the midmost marrow of his bones,  
He will return no more.' And those, her  
    three,  
Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him  
    from the gate.

And after this, a week-beyond, again.  
She call'd them, saying, 'There he  
    watches yet,  
There like a dog before his master's door !  
Kick'd, he returns : do ye not hate him,  
    ye ?  
Ye know yourselves : how can ye bide at  
    peace,  
Affronted with his fulsome innocence ?  
Are ye but creatures of the board and bed,  
No men to strike ? Fall on him all at  
    once,  
And if ye slay him I reckon not : if ye fail,  
Give ye the slave mine order to be bound,  
Bind him as heretofore, and bring him in :  
It may be ye shall slay him in his bonds.'

She spake ; and at her will they couch'd  
    their spears,  
Three against one : and Gawain passing  
    by,  
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of those  
    towers  
A villainy, three to one : and thro' his  
    heart  
The fire of honour and all noble deeds  
Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon thy  
    side—  
The caitiffs !' 'Nay,' said Pelleas, 'but  
    forbear ;  
He needs no aid who doth his lady's will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,  
Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog, with-  
    held  
A moment from the vermin that he sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and  
    kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
    three ;  
And they rose up, and bound, and brought  
    him in.  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
    burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil name  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten  
    hound :

'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit to touch,  
Far less to bind, your victor, and thrust him out,  
And let who will release him from his bonds.  
And if he comes again'—there she brake short;  
And Pelleas answer'd, 'Lady, for indeed I loved you and I deem'd you beautiful, I cannot brook to see your beauty marr'd Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me not, I cannot bear to dream you so forsworn: I had liefer ye were worthy of my love, Than to be loved again of you—farewell; And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my love, Vex not yourself: ye will not see me more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed upon the man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and thought,  
'Why have I push'd him from me? this man loves,  
If love there be: yet him I loved not. Why?  
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that in him  
A something—was it nobler than myself?—  
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of my kind.  
He could not love me, did he know me well.  
Nay, let him go—and quickly.' And her knights  
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him from his bonds,  
And flung them o'er the walls; and afterward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,  
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art thou not—  
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made  
Knight of his table; yea and he that won

The circlet? wherefore hast thou so defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their will?'

And Pelleas answer'd, 'O, their wills are hers  
For whom I won the circlet; and mine, hers,  
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mockery now,  
Other than when I found her in the woods;  
And tho' she hath me bounden but in spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her face;  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappiness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho' in scorn,  
'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,  
And let my lady beat me if she will:  
But an she send her delegate to thrall  
These fighting hands of mine—Christ kill me then  
But I will slice him handless by the wrist,  
And let my lady sear the stump for him,  
Howl as he may. But hold me for your friend:  
Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge my troth,  
Yea, by the honour of the Table Round,  
I will be leal to thee and work thy work,  
And tame thy jailing princess to thine hand.  
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I will say  
That I have slain thee. She will let me in  
To hear the manner of thy fight and fall;  
Then, when I come within her counsels, then  
From prime to vespers will I chant thy praise  
As prowtest knight and truest lover, more  
Than any have sung thee living, till she long

To have thee back in lusty life again,  
Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
and warm,  
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now  
thy horse  
And armour : let me go : be comforted :  
Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
and hope  
The third night hence will bring thee  
news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all his  
arms,  
Saving the goodly sword, his prize, and  
took  
Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not, but  
help—  
Art thou not he whom men call light-of-  
love ?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so  
light.'  
Then bounded forward to the castle walls,  
And raised a bugle hanging from his neck,  
And winded it, and that so musically  
That all the old echoes hidden in the  
wall  
Rang out like hollow woods at hunting-  
tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the tower ;  
'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves thee  
not.'  
But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,  
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's court,  
And I have slain this Pelleas whom ye  
hate :  
Behold his horse and armour. Open  
gates,  
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,  
Her damsels, crying to their lady, 'Lo !  
Pelleas is dead—he told us—he that hath  
His horse and armour : will ye let him in ?  
He slew him ! Gawain, Gawain of the  
court,  
Sir Gawain—there he waits below the  
wall,  
Blowing his bugle as who should say him  
nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on thro'  
open door  
Rode Gawain, whom she greeted cour-  
teously.  
'Dead, is it so ?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,'  
said he,  
'And oft in dying cried upon your name.'  
'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good  
knight,  
But never let me bide one hour at peace.'  
'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be fair  
enow :  
But I to your dead man have given my  
troth,  
That whom ye loathe, him will I make  
you love.'

So those three days, aimless about the  
land,  
Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
Waited, until the third night brought a  
moon  
With promise of large light on woods and  
ways.

Hot was the night and silent ; but a  
sound  
Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay—  
Which Pelleas had heard sung before the  
Queen,  
And seen her sadden listening—vext his  
heart,  
And marr'd his rest—'A worm within the  
rose.'

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,  
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous  
fair,  
One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and  
sky,  
One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all  
mine air—  
I cared not for the thorns ; the thorns  
were there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,  
One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,  
No rose but one—what other rose had I ?  
One rose, my rose ; a rose that will not  
die,—  
He dies who loves it,—if the worm be  
there.'

This tender rhyme, and evermore the  
 doubt,  
 'Why lingers Gawain with his golden  
 news?'  
 So shook him that he could not rest, but  
 rode  
 Ere midnight to her walls, and bound his  
 horse  
 Hard by the gates. Wide open were the  
 gates,  
 And no watch kept; and in thro' these  
 he past,  
 And heard but his own steps, and his  
 own heart  
 Beating, for nothing moved but his own  
 self,  
 And his own shadow. Then he crost  
 the court,  
 And spied not any light in hall or bower,  
 But saw the postern portal also wide  
 Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all  
 Of roses white and red, and brambles mixt  
 And overgrowing them, went on, and  
 found,  
 Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
 moon,  
 Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
 Came lightening downward, and so spilt  
 itself  
 Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions  
 rear'd  
 Above the bushes, gilden-peakt: in one,  
 Red after revel, droned her lurdane knights  
 Slumbering, and their three squires across  
 their feet:  
 In one, their malice on the placid lip  
 Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her damsels  
 lay:  
 And in the third, the circlet of the jousts  
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
 Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro' the  
 leaf  
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he drew:  
 Back, as a coward slinks from what he  
 fears  
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or hound

Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
 again,  
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he  
 stood  
 There on the castle-bridge once more, and  
 thought,  
 'I will go back, and slay them where they  
 lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them yet  
 in sleep  
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy  
 sleep,  
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword,  
 and thought,  
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? the King  
 hath bound  
 And sworn me to this brotherhood';  
 again,  
 'Alas that ever a knight should be so  
 false.'  
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groan-  
 ing laid  
 The naked sword athwart their naked  
 throats,  
 There left it, and them sleeping; and she  
 lay,  
 The circlet of the tourney round her  
 brows,  
 And the sword of the tourney across her  
 throat.

And forth he past, and mounting on  
 his horse  
 Stared at her towers that, larger than  
 themselves  
 In their own darkness, throng'd into the  
 moon.  
 Then crush'd the saddle with his thighs,  
 and clench'd  
 His hands, and madden'd with himself  
 and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me in  
 their blood  
 At the last day? I might have answer'd  
 them  
 Even before high God. O towers so  
 strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while I gaze  
The crack of earthquake shivering to your  
base

Split you, and Hell burst up your harlot  
roofs

Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and thro'  
within,

Black as the harlot's heart—hollow as a  
skull!

Let the fierce east scream thro' your eyelet-  
holes,

And whirl the dust of harlots round and  
round

In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I saw  
him there—

Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell. Who  
yells

Here in the still sweet summer night, but  
I—

I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd her  
fool?

Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself most  
fool;

Beast too, as lacking human wit—dis-  
graced,

Dishonour'd all for trial of true love—  
Love?—we be all alike: only the King

Hath made us fools and liars. O noble  
vows!

O great and sane and simple race of brutes  
That own no lust because they have no  
law!

For why should I have loved her to my  
shame?

I loathe her, as I loved her to my shame.  
I never loved her, I but lusted for her—  
Away—'

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,  
And bounded forth and vanish'd thro' the  
night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch on  
her throat,

Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd  
herself

To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not slain  
This Pelleas! here he stood, and might  
have slain

Me and thyself.' And he that tells the tale

Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd.  
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on  
earth,

And only lover; and thro' her love her  
life

Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half the  
night,

And over hard and soft, striking the sod  
From out the soft, the spark from off the  
hard,

Rode till the star above the wakening sun,  
Beside that tower where Percivale was  
cowl'd,

Glanced from the rosy forehead of the  
dawn.

For so the words were flash'd into his  
heart

He knew not whence or wherefore: 'O  
sweet star,

Pure on the virgin forehead of the dawn!'  
And there he would have wept, but felt

his eyes  
Harder and drier than a fountain bed

In summer: thither came the village girls  
And linger'd talking, and they come no  
more

Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it from  
the heights

Again with living waters in the change  
Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his  
heart

Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs,  
that he,

Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but here,  
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself  
down,

And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep; so  
lay,

Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain fired  
The hall of Merlin, and the morning star  
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some one  
nigh,

Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
crying,

'False! and I held thee pure as Guinevere.'

But Percivale stood near him and  
replied,  
'Am I but false as Guinevere is pure?  
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or being  
one  
Of our free-spoken Table hast not heard  
That Lancelot'—there he check'd him-  
self and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with  
one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
That made it plunges thro' the wound  
again,  
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank and  
wail'd,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was  
mute.  
'Have any of our Round Table held their  
vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a word.  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said  
Percivale.  
'Why then let men couple at once with  
wolves.  
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his  
horse  
And fled: small pity upon his horse had  
he,  
Or on himself, or any, and when he met  
A cripple, one that held a hand for alms—  
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old dwarf-  
elm  
That turns its back on the salt blast, the  
boy  
Paused not, but overrode him, shouting,  
'False,  
And false with Gawain!' and so left him  
bruised  
And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and  
wood  
Went ever streaming by him till the gloom,  
That follows on the turning of the world,  
Darken'd the common path: he twitch'd  
the reins,  
And made his beast that better knew it,  
swerve

Now off it and now on; but when he saw  
High up in heaven the hall that Merlin  
built,  
Blackening against the dead-green stripes  
of even,  
'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye build  
too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city gates  
Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
Warm with a gracious parting from the  
Queen,  
Peace at his heart, and gazing at a star  
And marvelling what it was: on whom  
the boy,  
Across the silent seeded meadow-grass  
Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,  
'What name hast thou  
That ridest here so blindly and so  
hard?'  
'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a  
scourge am I  
To lash the treasons of the Table Round.'  
'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many  
names,' he cried:  
'I am wrath and shame and hate and evil  
fame,  
And like a poisonous wind I pass to  
blast  
And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the  
Queen.'  
'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt  
thou pass.'  
'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth, and  
either knight  
Drew back a space, and when they closed,  
at once  
The weary steed of Pelleas floundering  
flung  
His rider, who call'd out from the dark  
field,  
'Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have  
no sword.'  
Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy lips—  
and sharp;  
But here will I disedge it by thy death.'  
'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is to be  
slain,'  
And Lancelot, with his heel upon the  
fall'n,



Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then  
spake :

‘Rise, weakling ; I am Lancelot ; say thy  
say.’

And Lancelot slowly rode his warhorse  
back

To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief while  
Caught his unbroken limbs from the dark  
field,

And follow’d to the city. It chanced that  
both

Brake into hall together, worn and pale.  
There with her knights and dames was  
Guinevere.

Full wonderingly she gazed on Lancelot  
So soon return’d, and then on Pelleas,  
him

Who had not greeted her, but cast him-  
self

Down on a bench, hard-breathing. ‘Have  
ye fought?’

She ask’d of Lancelot. ‘Ay, my Queen,’  
he said.

‘And thou hast overthrown him?’ ‘Ay,  
my Queen.’

Then she, turning to Pelleas, ‘O young  
knight,

Hath the great heart of knighthood in  
thee fail’d

So far thou canst not bide, unfrowardly,  
A fall from *him*? Then, for he answer’d  
not,

‘Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the  
Queen,

May help them, loose thy tongue, and let  
me know.’

But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
She quail’d ; and he, hissing ‘I have no  
sword,’

Sprang from the door into the dark.  
The Queen

Look’d hard upon her lover, he on her ;  
And each foresaw the dolorous day to  
be :

And all talk died, as in a grove all song  
Beneath the shadow of some bird of prey ;  
Then a long silence came upon the hall,  
And Modred thought, ‘The time is hard  
at hand.’

## THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in his  
mood

Had made mock-knight of Arthur’s Table  
Round,

At Camelot, high above the yellowing  
woods,

Danced like a wither’d leaf before the hall.

And toward him from the hall, with harp  
in hand,

And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
Came Tristram, saying, ‘Why skip ye  
so, Sir Fool?’

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once  
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock  
Heard a child wail. A stump of oak  
half-dead,

From roots like some black coil of carven  
snakes,

Clutch’d at the crag, and started thro’  
mid air

Bearing an eagle’s nest : and thro’ the tree  
Rush’d ever a rainy wind, and thro’ the  
wind

Pierced ever a child’s cry : and crag and  
tree

Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous  
nest,

This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,  
And all unscarr’d from beak or talon,  
brought

A maiden babe ; which Arthur pitying  
took,

Then gave it to his Queen to rear : the  
Queen

But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms  
Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
And named it Nestling ; so forgot herself  
A moment, and her cares ; till that young  
life

Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal  
cold

Past from her ; and in time the carcanet  
Vext her with plaintive memories of the  
child :

So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,  
 'Take thou the jewels of this dead innocence,  
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-prize.'

To whom the King, 'Peace to thine eagle-borne  
 Dead nestling, and this honour after death,  
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,  
 I muse  
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone  
 Those diamonds that I rescued from the tarn,  
 And Lancelot won, methought, for thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them fall,'  
 she cried,  
 'Plunge and be lost—ill-fated as they were,  
 A bitterness to me!—ye look amazed,  
 Not knowing they were lost as soon as given—  
 Slid from my hands, when I was leaning out  
 Above the river—that unhappy child  
 Past in her barge: but rosier luck will go  
 With these rich jewels, seeing that they came  
 Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,  
 But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
 Perchance—who knows?—the purest of  
 thy knights  
 May win them for the purest of my maids.'

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts  
 With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways  
 From Camelot in among the faded fields  
 To furthest towers; and everywhere the knights  
 Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn  
 Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribb'd  
 From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his nose

Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand off,  
 And one with shatter'd fingers dangling lame,  
 A churl, to whom indignantly the King,

'My churl, for whom Christ died, what evil beast  
 Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face? or fiend?  
 Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of splinter'd teeth,  
 Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt stump  
 Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the maim'd churl,

'He took them and he drave them to his tower—  
 Some hold he was a table-knight of thine—  
 A hundred goodly ones—the Red Knight, he—  
 Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red Knight  
 Brake in upon me and drave them to his tower;  
 And when I call'd upon thy name as one  
 That doest right by gentle and by churl,  
 Maim'd me and maul'd, and would outright have slain,  
 Save that he sware me to a message, saying,  
 "Tell thou the King and all his liars, that I  
 Have founded my Round Table in the North,  
 And whatsoever his own knights have sworn  
 My knights have sworn the counter to it—and say  
 My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
 But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
 To be none other than themselves—and say  
 My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
 But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
 To be none other; and say his hour is come,  
 The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
 Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."'

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the sene-  
schal,  
'Take thou my churl, and tend him  
curiously  
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be  
whole.  
The heathen—but that ever-climbing  
wave,  
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest—and renegades,  
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion,  
whom  
The wholesome realm is purged of other-  
where,  
Friends, thro' your manhood and your  
fēalty,—now  
Make their last head like Satan in the  
North.  
My younger knights, new-made, in whom  
your flower  
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling,  
which achieved,  
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to  
shore.  
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchain'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle  
with it,  
Only to yield my Queen her own again?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it  
well?'

There to Sir Lancelot answer'd, 'It is  
well:  
Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me.  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd  
him,  
And while they stood without the doors,  
the King  
Turn'd to him saying, 'Is it then so well?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, "A sound is in his  
ears"?'  
The foot that loiters, bidden go,—the  
glance  
That only seems half-loyal to command,—

A manner somewhat fall'n from rever-  
ence—  
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our  
knights  
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?  
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,  
uprear'd,  
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no  
more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger  
knights,  
Down the slope city rode, and sharply  
turn'd  
North by the gate. In her high bower  
the Queen,  
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that  
she sigh'd.  
Then ran across her memory the strange  
rhyme  
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who  
knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he  
goes.'

But when the morning of a tournament,  
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,  
Round whose sick head all night, like  
birds of prey,  
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,  
And down a streetway hung with folds of  
pure  
White samite, and by fountains running  
wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups of  
gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow  
sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd  
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their  
Queen  
White-robed in honour of the stainless  
child,

And some with scatter'd jewels, like a  
bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of  
fire.  
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes  
again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a  
dream

To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll  
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began :  
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf  
And gloom and gleam, and shower and  
shorn plume

Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as one  
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
When all the goodlier guests are past away,  
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the  
lists.

He saw the laws that ruled the tournament  
Broken, but spake not ; once, a knight  
cast down

Before his throne of arbitration cursed  
The dead babe and the follies of the King ;  
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,  
Modred, a narrow face : anon he heard  
The voice that billow'd round the barriers  
roar

An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,  
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
And armour'd all in forest green, whereon  
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,  
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield  
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late  
From overseas in Brittany return'd,  
And marriage with a princess of that realm,  
Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the  
Woods—

Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime  
with pain  
His own against him, and now yearn'd to  
shake

The burthen off his heart in one full shock  
With Tristram ev'n to death : his strong  
hands gript

And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
Until he groan'd for wrath—so many of  
those,

That ware their ladies' colours on the  
casque,  
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the  
bounds,  
And there with gibes and flickering  
mockeries  
Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven crests !  
O shame !  
What faith have these in whom they swear  
to love ?  
The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave,  
the gems,  
Not speaking other word than 'Hast thou  
won ?  
Art thou the purest, brother ? See, the hand  
Wherewith thou takest this, is red !' to  
whom  
Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's  
languorous mood,  
Made answer, 'Ay, but wherefore toss  
me this  
Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound ?  
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength  
of heart  
And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,  
Are winners in this pastime of our King.  
My hand—belike the lance hath dript  
upon it—  
No blood of mine, I trow ; but O chief  
knight,  
Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,  
Great brother, thou nor I have made the  
world ;  
Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery made  
his horse  
Caracole ; then bow'd his homage, bluntly  
saying,  
'Fair damsels, each to him who worships  
each  
Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold  
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'  
And most of these were mute, some anger'd,  
one  
Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead,' and  
one,  
'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and  
mantle clung,  
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day  
Went glooming down in wet and weariness :

But under her black brows a swarthy one  
Laugh'd shrilly, crying, 'Praise the patient  
saints,

Our one white day of Innocence hath past,  
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt. So  
be it.

The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the  
year,

Would make the world as blank as  
Winter-tide.

Come—let us gladden their sad eyes, our  
Queen's

And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity  
With all the kindlier colours of the field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the  
feast

Variouly gay : for he that tells the tale  
Likened them, saying, as when an hour of  
cold

Falls on the mountain in midsummer  
snows,

And all the purple slopes of mountain  
flowers

Pass under white, till the warm hour  
returns

With veer of wind, and all are flowers  
again ;

So dame and damsel cast the simple white,  
And glowing in all colours, the live grass,  
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy,  
glanced

About the revels, and with mirth so loud  
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the  
Queen,

And wroth at Tristram and the lawless  
jousts,

Brake up their sports, then slowly to her  
bower

Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow  
morn,

High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,  
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the hall.

Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye so,  
Sir Fool?'

Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet  
replied,

'Belike for lack of wiser company ;  
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit  
Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip  
To know myself the wisest knight of all.'

'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 'tis eating  
dry

To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
To dance to.' Then he twangled on his  
harp,

And while he twangled little Dagonet stood  
Quiet as any water-sodden log

Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook ;  
But when the twangling ended, skipt again ;

And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not, Sir  
Fool?'

Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty years  
Skip to the broken music of my brains

Than any broken music thou canst make.'  
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to  
come,

'Good now, what music have I broken,  
fool?'

And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur,  
the King's ;

For when thou playest that air with Queen  
Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy bride,  
Her daintier namesake down in Brittany—

And so thou breakest Arthur's music too.'  
'Save for that broken music in thy brains,

Sir fool,' said Tristram, 'I would break  
thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were  
o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by the  
shell—

I am but a fool to reason with a fool—

Come, thou art crabb'd and sour : but  
lean me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears,  
And harken if my music be not true.

'Free love—free field—we love but  
while we may :

The woods are hush'd, their music is no  
more :

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away :  
New leaf, new life—the days of frost are  
o'er :

New life, new love, to suit the newer day :  
New loves are sweet as those that went  
before :

Free love—free field—we love but while  
we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-measure  
to my tune,  
Not stood stockstill. I made it in the  
woods,  
And heard it ring as true as tested gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised in  
his hand,  
'Friend, did ye mark that fountain  
yesterday  
Made to run wine?—but this had run  
itself

All out like a long life to a sour end—  
And them that round it sat with golden  
cups

To hand the wine to whosoever came—  
The twelve small damosels white as  
Innocence,

In honour of poor Innocence the babe,  
Who left the gems which Innocence the  
Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the King  
Gave for a prize—and one of those white  
slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,  
"Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and thereupon  
I drank,

Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the  
draught was mud.'

And Tristram, 'Was it muddier than  
thy gibes?

Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee?—  
Not marking how the knighthood mock  
thee, fool—

"Fear God: honour the King—his one  
true knight—

Sole follower of the vows"—for here be  
they

Who knew thee swine enow before I came,  
Smuttier than blasted grain: but when  
the King

Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up  
It frightened all free fool from out thy heart;  
Which left thee less than fool, and less  
than swine,  
A naked aught—yet swine I hold thee still,  
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee  
swine.'

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,  
'Knight, an ye fling those rubies round  
my neck

In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some  
touch

Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.  
Swine? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd  
—the world

Is flesh and shadow—I have had my day.  
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind  
Hath foul'd me—an I wallow'd, then I  
wash'd—

I have had my day and my philosophies—  
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's  
fool.

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses, rams  
and geese

Troop'd round a Paynim harper once,  
who thrumm'd

On such a wire as musically as thou  
Some such fine song—but never a king's  
fool.'

And Tristram, 'Then were swine,  
goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard  
Had such a mastery of his mystery  
That he could harp his wife up out of hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of  
his foot,

'And whither harp'st thou thine? down!  
and thyself

Down! and two more: a helpful harper  
thou,

That harpest downward! Dost thou know  
the star

We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for when  
our King

Was victor wellnigh day by day, the  
knights,



Glorying in each new glory, set his name  
High on all hills, and in the signs of  
heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd, 'Ay, and when  
the land  
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set  
yourself  
To babble about him, all to show your  
wit—

And whether he were King by courtesy,  
Or King by right—and so went harping  
down

The black king's highway, got so far, and  
grew

So witty that ye play'd at ducks and  
drakes

With Arthur's vows on the great lake of  
fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the  
star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in  
open day.'

And Dagonet, 'Nay, nor will I see it  
and hear.

It makes a silent music up in heaven,  
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,  
And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he said,  
'ye talk

Fool's treason: is the King thy brother  
fool?'

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and  
shrill'd,

'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of  
fools!

Conceits himself as God that he can make  
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk  
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-  
combs,

And men from beasts—Long live the king  
of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced  
away;

But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and  
the west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt  
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore

Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood  
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye  
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd,  
or flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath  
blown,

Unruffling waters re-collect the shape  
Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;  
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,  
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn.  
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode.

At length

A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs  
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the  
which himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt  
Against a shower, dark in the golden  
grove

Appearing, sent his fancy back to where  
She lived a moon in that low lodge with  
him:

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish  
King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was  
away,

And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading  
worse than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any  
word,

But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram  
lookt

So sweet, that halting, in he past, and  
sank

Down on a drift of foliage random-blown;  
But could not rest for musing how to  
smoothe

And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.  
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all  
The tonguesters of the court she had not  
heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas  
After she left him lonely here? a name?  
Was it the name of one in Brittany,  
Isolt, the daughter of the King? 'Isolt  
Of the white hands' they call'd her: the  
sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid herself,  
 Who served him well with those white hands of hers,  
 And loved him well, until himself had thought  
 He loved her also, wedded easily,  
 But left her all as easily, and return'd.  
 The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes  
 Had drawn him home—what marvel? then he laid  
 His brows upon the drifted leaf and dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany  
 Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
 And show'd them both the ruby-chain, and both

Began to struggle for it, till his Queen  
 Graspt it so hard, that all her hand was red.  
 Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her hand is red !

These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,  
 And melts within her hand—her hand is hot

With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,  
 Is all as cool and white as any flower.'

Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then  
 A whimpering of the spirit of the child,  
 Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd ; but Arthur with a hundred spears

Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
 And many a glancing plash and sallowy isle,

The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh  
 Glared on a huge machicolated tower  
 That stood with open doors, whereout was roll'd

A roar of riot, as from men secure  
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease  
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.  
 'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth, for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the tower,  
 A goodly brother of the Table Round  
 Swung by the neck : and on the boughs a shield

Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,  
 And therebeside a horn, inflamed the knights

At that dishonour done the gilded spur,  
 Till each would clash the shield, and blow the horn.

But Arthur waved them back. Alone he rode.

Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,

That sent the face of all the marsh aloft  
 An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud  
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight heard, and all,

Even to tipmost lance and topmost helm,  
 In blood-red armour sallying, howl'd to the King,

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee flat !—

Lo ! art thou not that eunuch-hearted King

Who fain had clipt free manhood from the world—

The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's curse, and I !

Slain was the brother of my paramour  
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine

And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell,

And stings itself to everlasting death,  
 To hang whatever knight of thine I fought  
 And tumbled. Art thou King?—Look to thy life !'

He ended : Arthur knew the voice ; the face

Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name

Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.

And Arthur deign'd not use of word or sword,

But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from horse

To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,  
 Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp

Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching  
 wave,  
 Heard in dead night along that table-  
 shore,  
 Drops flat, and after the great waters  
 break  
 Whitenings for half a league, and thin  
 themselves,  
 Far over sands marbled with moon and  
 cloud,  
 From less and less to nothing; thus he fell  
 Head-heavy; then the knights, who  
 watch'd him, roar'd  
 And shouted and leapt down upon the  
 fall'n;  
 There trampled out his face from being  
 known,  
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed  
 themselves:  
 Nor heard the King for their own cries,  
 but sprang  
 Thro' open doors, and swording right and  
 left  
 Men, women, on their sodden faces,  
 hurl'd  
 The tables over and the wines, and slew  
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,  
 And all the pavement stream'd with  
 massacre:  
 Then, echoing yell with yell; they fired  
 the tower,  
 Which half that autumn night, like the  
 live North,  
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,  
 Made all above it, and a hundred meres  
 About it, as the water Moab saw  
 Come round by the East, and out beyond  
 them flush'd  
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to  
 shore,  
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red  
 dream  
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge  
 return'd,  
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the  
 boughs.

He whistled his good warhorse left to  
 graze  
 Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,  
 And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,  
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a  
 cross,  
 Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye?' 'Lord,'  
 she said, 'my man  
 Hath left me or is dead'; whereon he  
 thought—  
 'What, if she hate me now? I would  
 not this.  
 What, if she love me still? I would not  
 that.  
 I know not what I would'—but said to  
 her,  
 'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate  
 return,  
 He find thy favour changed and love thee  
 not'—  
 Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonnesse  
 Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard  
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly  
 hounds  
 Yelp at his heart, but turning, past and  
 gain'd  
 Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,  
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair  
 And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the  
 Queen.  
 And when she heard the feet of Tristram  
 grind  
 The spiring stone that scaled about her  
 tower,  
 Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,  
 and there  
 Belted his body with her white embrace,  
 Crying aloud, 'Not Mark—not Mark,  
 my soul!  
 The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:  
 Catlike thro' his own castle steals my  
 Mark,  
 But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his  
 halls  
 Who hates thee, as I him—ev'n to the  
 death.  
 My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark

Quicken within me, and knew that thou wert nigh.'

To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am here.

Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,

'Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,

But save for dread of thee had beaten me, Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow—Mark?

What rights are his that dare not strike for them?

Not lift a hand—not, tho' he found me thus!

But harken! have ye met him? hence he went

To-day for three days' hunting—as he said—

And so returns belike within an hour.

Mark's way, my soul!—but eat not thou with Mark,

Because he hates thee even more than fears;

Nor drink: and when thou passest any wood

Close vizard, lest an arrow from the bush Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.

My God, the measure of my hate for Mark

Is as the measure of my love for thee.'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,

Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake

To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,

'O hunter, and O blower of the horn, Harper, and thou hast been a rover too, For, ere I mated with my shambling king, Ye twain had fallen out about the bride Of one—his name is out of me—the prize, If prize she were—(what marvel—she could see)—

Thine, friend; and ever since my craven seeks

To wreck thee villainously: but, O Sir Knight,

What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen Paramount,

Here now to my Queen Paramount of love And loveliness—ay, lovelier than when first

Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse, Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt;

'Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen

My dole of beauty trebled?' and he said, 'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me—soft, gracious, kind—

Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n to him,

Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow To make one doubt if ever the great Queen Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt,

'Ah then, false hunter and false harper, thou

Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,

Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me

That Guinevere had sinn'd against the highest,

And I—mis-yoked with such a want of man—

That I could hardly sin against the lowest.'

He answer'd, 'O my soul, be comforted!

If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings, If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,

Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin

That made us happy: but how ye greet me—fear

And fault and doubt—no word of that fond tale—

Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet  
memories  
Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden, spake  
Isolt,

'I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for, hour  
by hour,

Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
O sweeter than all memories of thee,  
Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-  
smiling seas,

Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain  
dash'd

Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,  
Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?  
Wedded her?

Fought in her father's battles? wounded  
there?

The King was all fulfill'd with grateful-  
ness,

And she, my namesake of the hands, that  
heal'd

Thy hurt and heart with unguent and  
caress—

Well—can I wish her any huger wrong  
Than having known thee? her too hast  
thou left

To pine and waste in those sweet  
memories.

O were I not my Mark's, by whom all  
men

Are noble, I should hate thee more than  
love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light hands,  
replied,

'Grace, Queen, for being loved: she  
loved me well.

Did I love her? the name at least I loved.  
Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!

The night was dark; the true star set.  
Isolt!

The name was ruler of the dark——Isolt?  
Care not for her! patient, and prayerful,

meek,

Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to  
God.'

And Isolt answer'd, 'Yea, and why  
not I?

Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,  
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell  
thee now.

Here one black, mute midsummer night  
I sat,

Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering  
where,

Murmuring a light song I had heard thee  
sing,

And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.  
Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near me  
stood,

In fuming sulphur blue and green, a  
fiend—

Mark's way to steal behind one in the  
dark—

For there was Mark: "He has wedded  
her," he said,

Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown  
of towers

So shook to such a roar of all the sky,  
That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,

And woke again in utter dark, and cried,  
"I will flee hence and give myself to  
God"—

And thou wert lying in thy new leman's  
arms.'

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her  
hand,

'May God be with thee, sweet, when old  
and gray,

And past desire!' a saying that anger'd  
her.

"May God be with thee, sweet, when  
thou art old,

And sweet no more to me!" I need  
Him now.

For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so  
gross

Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the  
mast?

The greater man, the greater courtesy.

Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's  
knight!

But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild  
beasts—

Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance



Becomes thee well—art grown wild beast  
thyself.

How darest thou, if lover, push me even  
In fancy from thy side, and set me far  
In the gray distance, half a life away,  
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,  
unswear!

Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,  
Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,  
Thy marriage and mine own, that I  
should suck

Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I believe.  
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there ye  
kneel,

And solemnly as when ye swear to him,  
The man of men, our King—My God,  
the power

Was once in vows when men believed the  
King!

They lied not then, who swear, and thro'  
their vows

The King prevailing made his realm:—  
I say,

Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when  
old,

Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in de-  
spair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and  
down,

'Vows! did you keep the vow you made  
to Mark

More than I mine? Lied, say ye? Nay,  
but learnt,

The vow that binds too strictly snaps  
itself—

My knighthood taught me this—ay, being  
snapt—

We run more counter to the soul thereof  
Than had we never sworn. I swear no  
more.

I swore to the great King, and am for-  
sworn.

For once—ev'n to the height—I honour'd  
him.

"Man, is he man at all?" methought,  
when first

I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and  
beheld

That victor of the Pagan throned in hall—

His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow  
Like hillsnow high in heaven; the steel-  
blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his lips  
with light—

Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,  
With Merlin's mystic babble about his end  
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a stool  
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me no  
man,

But Michaël trampling Satan; so I swear,  
Being amazed: but this went by—The  
vows!

O ay—the wholesome madness of an  
hour—

They served their use, their time; for  
every knight

Believed himself a greater than himself,  
And every follower eyed him as a God;  
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,  
Did mightier deeds than otherwise he had  
done,

And so the realm was made; but then  
their vows—

First mainly thro' that sullyng of our  
Queen—

Began to gall the knighthood, asking  
whence

Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?  
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd up  
from out the deep?

They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh  
and blood

Of our old kings: whence then? a doubt-  
ful lord

To bind them by inviolable vows,  
Which flesh and blood perforce would  
violate:

For feel this arm of mine—the tide within  
Red with free chase and heather-scented  
air,

Pulsing full man; can Arthur make me  
pure

As any maiden child? lock up my tongue  
From uttering freely what I freely hear?

Bind me to one? The wide world  
laughs at it.

And worldling of the world am I, and  
know

The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour



Woos his own end; we are not angels here  
Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman of  
the woods,

And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale  
Mock them: my soul, we love but while  
we may;

And therefore is my love so large for thee,  
Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her,  
and she said,

'Good: an I turn'd away my love for thee  
To some one thrice as courteous as thy-  
self—

For courtesy wins woman all as well  
As valour may, but he that closes both  
Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller indeed,  
Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I loved  
This knightliest of all knights, and cast  
thee back

Thine own small saw, "We love but  
while we may,"

Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,  
Mindful of what he brought to adorn her  
with,

The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch  
The warm white apple of her throat,  
replied,

'Press this a little closer, sweet, until—  
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd—  
meat;

Wine, wine—and I will love thee to the  
death,

And out beyond into the dream to come.'

So then, when both were brought to  
full accord,

She rose, and set before him all he will'd;  
And after these had comforted the blood  
With meats and wines, and satiated their  
hearts—

Now talking of their woodland paradise,  
The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts,  
the lawns;

Now mocking at the much ungainliness,  
And craven shifts, and long crane legs of  
Mark—

Then Tristram laughing caught the harp,  
and sang:

'Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend  
the brier!

A star in heaven, a star within the mere!

Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire,

And one was far apart, and one was near:

Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the  
grass!

And one was water and one star was fire,

And one will ever shine and one will pass.

Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move the  
mere.'

Then in the light's last glimmer Tris-  
tram show'd

And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,

'The collar of some Order, which our  
King

Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,

For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy  
peers.'

'Not so, my Queen,' he said, 'but the  
red fruit

Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,

And won by Tristram as a tourney-prize,

And hither brought by Tristram for his  
last

Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
thee.'

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging  
round her neck,

Claspt it; and cried 'Thine Order, O my  
Queen!'

But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd  
throat,

Out of the dark, just as the lips had  
touch'd,

Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—

'Mark's way,' said Mark, and clove him  
thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and  
while he climb'd,

All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping  
gloom,

The stairway to the hall, and look'd and  
saw

The great Queen's bower was dark,—  
about his feet

A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,

'What art thou?' and the voice about his  
feet  
Sent up an answer, sobbing, 'I am thy  
fool,  
And I shall never make thee smile again.'

### GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,  
and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little  
maid,  
A novice: one low light betwixt them  
burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all  
abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the  
face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land  
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of  
flight  
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the  
throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for  
this  
He chill'd the popular praises of the King  
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the  
White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and  
sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end; and all his  
aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lance-  
lot.

For thus it chanced one morn when  
all the court,  
Green-suited, but with plumes that  
mock'd the may,  
Had been, their wont, a-maying and  
return'd,  
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,

Climb'd to the high top of the garden-  
wall  
To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her  
best  
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
The williest and the worst; and more  
than this  
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
Spied where he couch'd, and as the  
gardener's hand  
Picks from the colewort a green cater-  
pillar,  
So from the high wall and the flowering  
grove  
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the  
heel,  
And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd  
with dust,  
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and these  
Full knightly without scorn; for in those  
days  
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in  
scorn;  
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him  
By those whom God had made full-limb'd  
and tall,  
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help  
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or  
thrice  
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled,  
and went:  
But, ever after, the small violence done  
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
This matter to the Queen, at first she  
laugh'd  
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who  
cries  
'I shudder, some one steps across my  
grave';

Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for in-  
deed  
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
Would track her guilt until he found, and  
hers  
Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
Henceforward rarely could she front in  
hall,  
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent  
eye :  
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend  
the soul,  
To help it from the death that cannot die,  
And save it even in extremes, began  
To vex and plague her. Many a time for  
hours,  
Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
In the dead night, grim faces came and  
went  
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—  
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking  
doors,  
Heard by the watcher, in a haunted house,  
That keeps the rust of murder on the  
walls—  
Held her awake : or if she slept, she  
dream'd  
An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to  
stand  
On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she  
turn'd—  
When lo ! her own, that broadening from  
her feet,  
And blackening, swallow'd all the land,  
and in it  
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
And all this trouble did not pass but grew ;  
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless  
King,  
And trustful courtesies of household life,  
Became her bane ; and at the last she  
said,  
'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own  
land,  
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again, some evil chance

Will make the smouldering scandal break  
and blaze  
Before the people, and our lord the King.  
And Lancelot ever promised, but re-  
main'd,  
And still they met and met. Again she  
said,  
'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee  
hence.'  
And then they were agreed upon a night  
(When the good King should not be there)  
to meet  
And part for ever. Vivien, lurking, heard.  
She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they  
met  
And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye  
to eye  
Low on the border of her couch they sat  
Stammering and staring. It was their  
last hour,  
A madness of farewells. And Modred  
brought  
His creatures to the basement of the tower  
For testimony ; and crying with full voice  
'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,'  
aroused  
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong,  
and he fell  
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare  
him off,  
And all was still : then she, 'The end is  
come,  
And I am shamed for ever' ; and he said,  
'Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin :  
- but rise,  
And fly to my strong castle overseas :  
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
There hold thee with my life against the  
world.'  
She answer'd, 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold  
me so ?  
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
Would God that thou couldst hide me  
from myself !  
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded : yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got  
her horse,

Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for  
he past,

Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste  
and weald,

And heard the Spirits of the waste and  
weald

Moan as she fled, or thought she heard  
them moan:

And in herself she moan'd 'Too late, too  
late!'

Till in the cold wind that foreruns the  
morn,

A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies a  
field of death;

For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the  
court,

Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she  
spake

There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine  
enemies

Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her  
time

To tell you': and her beauty, grace and  
power,

Wrought as a charm upon them, and  
they spared

To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the  
nuns;

Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name,  
nor sought,

Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for  
shrift,

But communed only with the little maid,  
Who pleased her with a babbling heed-  
lessness

Which often lured her from herself; but  
now,

This night, a rumour wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the  
realm,

And leagued him with the heathen, while  
the King

Was waging war on Lancelot: then she  
thought,

'With what a hate the people and the  
King

Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon  
her hands

Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late! so  
late!

What hour, I wonder, now?' and when  
she drew

No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her; 'Late,  
so late!'

Which when she heard, the Queen look'd  
up, and said,

'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may  
weep.'

Whereat full willingly sang the little  
maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the  
night and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we: for that we do  
repent;

And learning this, the bridegroom will  
relent.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light: so late! and dark and chill  
the night!

O let us in, that we may find the light!  
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is  
so sweet?

O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!  
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full passion-  
ately,

Her head upon her hands, remembering

Her thought when first she came, wept  
the sad Queen.

Then said the little novice prattling to her,

‘O pray you, noble lady, weep no  
more ;

But let my words, the words of one so  
small,

Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given—  
Comfort your sorrows ; for they do not  
flow

From evil done ; right sure am I of that,  
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the  
King’s,

And weighing find them less ; for gone is  
he

To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot  
there,

Round that strong castle where he holds  
the Queen ;

And Modred whom he left in charge of  
all,

The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King’s  
grief

For his own self, and his own Queen, and  
realm,

Must needs be thrice as great as any of  
ours.

For me, I thank the saints, I am not  
great.

For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.

None knows it, and my tears have brought  
me good :

But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet this  
grief

Is added to the griefs the great must  
bear,

That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a  
cloud :

As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked  
Queen,

And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,  
But were I such a King, it could not be.’

Then to her own sad heart matter’d the  
Queen,

‘Will the child kill me with her innocent  
talk ?’

But openly she answer’d, ‘Must not I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the  
realm ?’

‘Yea,’ said the maid, ‘this is all  
woman’s grief,

That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table  
Round

Which good King Arthur founded, years  
ago,

With signs and miracles and wonders,  
there

At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.’

Then thought the Queen within herself  
again,

‘Will the child kill me with her foolish  
prate ?’

But openly she spake and said to her,  
‘O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,

What canst thou know of Kings and  
Tables Round,

Or what of signs and wonders, but the  
signs

And simple miracles of thy nunnery ?’

To whom the little novice garrulously,  
‘Yea, but I know : the land was full of  
signs.

And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table—at the founding of it ;  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and  
he said

That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused, and turn-  
ing—there,

All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
He saw them—headland after headland  
flame

Far on into the rich heart of the west :



And in the light the white mermaiden  
 swam,  
 And strong man-breasted things stood  
 from the sea,  
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the  
 land,  
 To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
 Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
 So said my father—yea, and furthermore,  
 Next morning, while he past the dim-lit  
 woods,  
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with  
 joy  
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside  
 flower,  
 That shook beneath them, as the thistle  
 shakes  
 When three gray linnets wrangle for the  
 seed :  
 And still at evenings on before his horse  
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and  
 broke  
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and  
 broke  
 Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
 And when at last he came to Camelot,  
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the  
 hall ;  
 And in the hall itself was such a feast  
 As never man had dream'd ; for every  
 knight  
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
 By hands unseen ; and even as he said  
 Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the  
 butts  
 While the wine ran : so glad were spirits  
 and men  
 Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat  
 bitterly,  
 'Were they so glad? ill prophets were  
 they all,  
 Spirits and men : could none of them  
 foresee,  
 Not even thy wise father with his signs  
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon the  
 realm ?'

To whom the novice garrulously again,  
 'Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father  
 said,  
 Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
 Between the steep cliff and the coming  
 wave ;  
 And many a mystic lay of life and death  
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-  
 tops,  
 When round him bent the spirits of the  
 hills  
 With all their dewy hair blown back like  
 flame :  
 So said my father—and that night the bard  
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang  
 the King  
 As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at  
 those  
 Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois :  
 For there was no man knew from whence  
 he came ;  
 But after tempest, when the long wave  
 broke  
 All down the thundering shores of Bude  
 and Bos,  
 There came a day as still as heaven, and  
 then  
 They found a naked child upon the sands  
 Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea ;  
 And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd  
 him  
 Till he by miracle was approven King :  
 And that his grave should be a mystery  
 From all men, like his birth ; and could  
 he find  
 A woman in her womanhood as great  
 As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
 The twain together well might change the  
 world.  
 But even in the middle of his song  
 He falter'd, and his hand fell from the  
 harp,  
 And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would  
 have fall'n,  
 But that they stay'd him up ; nor would  
 he tell  
 His vision ; but what doubt that he fore-  
 saw  
 This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?'



Then thought the Queen, 'Lo! they  
 have set her on,  
 Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,  
 To play upon me,' and bow'd her head  
 nor spake.  
 Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd  
 hands,  
 Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
 Said the good nuns would check her  
 gadding tongue  
 Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem  
 To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
 Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
 Which my good father told me, check  
 me too  
 Nor let me shame my father's memory,  
 one  
 Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
 Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he  
 died,  
 Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers  
 back,  
 And left me; but of others who remain,  
 And of the two first-famed for courtesy—  
 And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
 But pray you, which had noblest, while  
 you moved  
 Among them, Lancelot or our lord the  
 King?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and  
 answer'd her,  
 'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
 Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
 In open battle or the tilting-field  
 Forbore his own advantage, and these  
 two  
 Were the most nobly-manner'd men of  
 all;  
 For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
 Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners such  
 fair fruit?  
 Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-  
 sand-fold  
 Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,  
 The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the  
 Queen:  
 'O closed about by narrowing nunnery-  
 walls,  
 What knowest thou of the world, and all  
 its lights  
 And shadows, all the wealth and all the  
 woe?  
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
 Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
 Pray for him that he scape the doom of  
 fire,  
 And weep for her who drew him to his  
 doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for  
 both;  
 But I should all as soon believe that his,  
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours  
 would be  
 Such as they are, were you the sinful  
 Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd  
 where she would heal;  
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who  
 cried,  
 'Such as thou art be never maiden more  
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague  
 And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
 And traitress.' When that storm of anger  
 brake  
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
 White as her veil, and stood before the  
 Queen  
 As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
 And when the Queen had added 'Get  
 thee hence,'  
 Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
 Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
 Saying in herself, 'The simple, fearful  
 child  
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful  
 guilt,  
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
 But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.

For what is true repentance but in  
thought—

Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant  
to us :

And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more.'

And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot  
came,

Reputed the best knight and goodliest  
man,

Ambassador, to lead her to his lord  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the  
time

Was maytime, and as yet no sin was  
dream'd,)

Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro'  
the earth,

And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before ; and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
saw

The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the  
King,

Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such  
a trance,

And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point where first she saw  
the King

Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to  
find

Her journey done, glanced at him, thought  
him cold,

High, self-contain'd, and, passionless, not  
like him,

'Not like my Lancelot'—while she  
brooded thus

And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,

There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery  
ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, "The King."  
She sat

Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when armed  
feet

Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she  
fell,

And grovell'd with her face against the  
floor :

There with her milkwhite arms and  
shadowy hair

She made her face a darkness from the  
King :

And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her ; then came silence, then a  
voice,

Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed,  
the King's :

'Liest thou here so low, the child of  
one

I honour'd, happy, dead before thy shame?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.

The children born of thee are sword and  
fire,

Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern  
Sea ;

Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right  
arm,

The mightiest of my knights, abode with  
me,

Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence I  
come—from him,

From waging bitter war with him : and  
he,

That did not shun to smite me in worse  
way,

Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left

He spared to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight: but many a  
knight was slain;

And many more, and all his kith and kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
And many more when Modred raised  
revolt,

Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.  
And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I  
live,

To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till my  
death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my  
doom.

Thou hast not made my life so sweet to  
me,

That I the King should greatly care to  
live;

For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
Bear with me for the last time while I  
show,

Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast  
sinn'd.

For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a  
deed

Of prowess done redress'd a random  
wrong.

But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and  
all

The realms together under me, their  
Head,

In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.

I made them lay their hands in mine and  
swear

To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as  
their King,

To break the heathen and uphold the  
Christ,

To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honour his own word as if his God's,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable  
words

And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a  
man.

And all this throve before I wedded thee,  
Believing, "lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."

Then came thy shameful sin with Lance-  
lot;

Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt;  
Then others, following these my mightiest  
knights,

And drawing foul ensample from fair  
names,

Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
and wrong,

Not greatly care to lose; but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my  
knights,

And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.

For which of us, who might be left, could  
speak

Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at  
thee?

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk  
Thy shadow still would glide from room  
to room,

And I should evermore be vext with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.

For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love  
thy lord,

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.

I am not made of so slight elements.  
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy  
shame.

I hold that man the worst of public foes  
Who either for his own or children's sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the  
wife

Whom he knows false, abide and rule the  
house :

For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
Creeps, no precaution used, among the  
crowd,

Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and  
saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the  
pulse

With devil's leaps, and poisons half the  
young.

Worst of the worst were that man he that  
reigns !

Better the King's waste hearth and aching  
heart

Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
The mockery of my people, and their  
bane.'

He paused, and in the pause she crept  
an inch

Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.

Then waiting by the doors the warhorse  
neigh'd

As at a friend's voice, and he spake again :

' Yet think not that I come to urge thy  
crimes,

I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
The wrath which forced my thoughts on  
that fierce law,

The doom of treason and the flaming  
death,

(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is  
past.

The pang—which while I weigh'd thy  
heart with one

Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Made my tears burn—is also past—in  
part.

And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives : do thou for thine own soul the  
rest.

But how to take last leave of all I loved ?  
O golden hair, with which I used to play  
Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with  
thee—

I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's : nay, they never were the  
King's.

I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and  
mine own flesh,

Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
" I loathe thee " : yet not less, O Guine-  
vere,

For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my  
life

So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and  
thou

Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,  
and know

I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me  
that,

I charge thee, my last hope. Now must  
I hence.

Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet  
blow :

They summon me their King to lead mine  
hosts

Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against the man they  
call

My sister's son—no kin of mine, who  
leagues

With Lords of the White Horse, heathen,  
and knights,

Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet  
myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn the  
event;  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side; see thee no more—  
Farewell!

And while she grovelling'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her  
neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands that  
blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps  
were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish  
found  
The casement: 'peradventure,' so she  
thought,  
'If I might see his face, and not be seen.'  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!  
And near him the sad nuns with each a  
light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the  
Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was  
lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon  
clung  
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she  
saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of  
fire.  
And even then he turn'd; and more and  
more  
The moony vapour rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him  
gray  
And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud  
'Oh Arthur!' there her voice brake  
suddenly,  
Then—as a stream that spouting from a  
cliff  
Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the  
vale—  
Went on in passionate utterance:

'Gone—my lord!  
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!  
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
Farewell? I should have answer'd his  
farewell.  
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord  
the King,  
My own true lord! how dare I call him  
mine?  
The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution: he, the  
King,  
Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?  
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,  
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;  
No, nor by living can I live it down.  
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks  
to months,  
The months will add themselves and make  
the years,  
The years will roll into the centuries,  
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
Let the world be; that is but of the world  
What else? what hope? I think there was  
a hope,  
Except he mock'd me when he spake of  
hope;  
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
And blessed be the King, who hath for-  
given  
My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
That in mine own heart I can live down  
sin  
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God. Ah great and gentle  
lord,  
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint



Among his warring senses, to thy  
knights—  
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that  
took  
Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the  
height  
To which I would not or I could not  
climb—  
I thought I could not breathe in that fine  
air  
That pure severity of perfect light—  
I yearn'd for warmth and colour which I  
found  
In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou  
art,  
Thou art the highest and most human  
too,  
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there  
none  
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
Now—ere he goes to the great Battle?  
none:  
Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
But now it were too daring. Ah my  
God,  
What might I not have made of thy fair  
world,  
Had I but loved thy highest creature  
here?  
It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
It surely was my profit had I known:  
It would have been my pleasure had I  
seen.  
We needs must love the highest when we  
see it,  
Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand  
Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she  
look'd and saw  
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said  
to her,  
'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'  
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
All round her, weeping; and her heart  
was loosed  
Within her, and she wept with these and  
said,

'Ye know me then, that wicked one,  
who broke  
The vast design and purpose of the King.  
O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-  
walls,  
Meek maidens, from the voices crying  
"shame."  
I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.  
Let no one dream but that he loves me  
still.  
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with  
you;  
Wear black and white, and be a nun like  
you,  
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with  
your feasts;  
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at  
your joys,  
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;  
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your  
shrines;  
Do each low office of your holy house;  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole  
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and halier too than I;  
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal  
mine own;  
And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,  
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the  
King.'

She said: they took her to themselves;  
and she  
Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too late?'  
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess  
died.  
Then she, for her good deeds and her  
pure life,  
And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had  
borne,  
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,  
lived  
For three brief years, and there, an  
Abbess, past  
To where beyond these voices there is  
peace.

*End of 'The Round Table.'*



## THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,  
First made and latest left of all the  
knights,

Told, when the man was no more than  
a voice

In the white winter of his age, to those  
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other  
minds.

For on their march to westward,  
Bedivere,

Who slowly paced among the slumbering  
host,

Heard in his tent the moanings of the  
King :

'I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His  
fields,

But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.  
O me ! for why is all around us here  
As if some lesser god had made the world,  
But had not force to shape it as he would,  
Till the High God behold it from beyond,  
And enter it, and make it beautiful?

Or else as if the world were wholly fair,  
But that these eyes of men are dense and  
dim,

And have not power to see it as it is :  
Perchance, because we see not to the  
close ;—

For I, being simple, thought to work His  
will,

And have but stricken with the sword in  
vain ;

And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend  
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.  
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my  
death :

Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall  
not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in the  
west,

There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain  
kill'd

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain  
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
Went shrilling, 'Hollow, hollow all  
delight !

Hail, King ! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
away.

Farewell ! there is an isle of rest for thee.  
And I am blown along a wandering  
wind.

And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight.'  
And fainter onward, like wild birds that  
change

Their season in the night and wail their  
way

From cloud to cloud, down the long wind  
the dream

Shrill'd ; but in going mingled with dim  
cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,  
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,  
When all is lost, and wife and child with  
wail

Pass to new lords ; and Arthur woke and  
call'd,

'Who spake ? A dream. O light upon  
the wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these  
dim cries

Thine ? or doth all that haunts the waste  
and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with me ?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and  
spake :

'O me, my King, let pass whatever will,  
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the  
field ;

But in their stead thy name and glory cling  
To all high places like a golden cloud  
For ever : but as yet thou shalt not pass.  
Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
death

Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man ;  
And care not thou for dreams from him,  
but rise—

I hear the steps of Modred in the west,

And with him many of thy people, and  
knights  
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but  
grosser grown  
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and  
thee.  
Right well in heart they know thee for  
the King.  
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
'Far other is this battle in the west  
Whereto we move, than when we strove  
in youth,  
And brake the petty kings, and fought  
with Rome,  
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman  
wall,  
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom  
is mine  
To war against my people and my knights.  
The king who fights his people fights  
himself.  
And they my knights, who loved me once,  
the stroke  
That strikes them dead is as my death to  
me.  
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way  
Thro' this blind haze, which ever since I  
saw  
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
Hath folded in the passes of the world.'

Then rose the King and moved his host  
by night,  
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by  
league,  
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonesse—  
A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
By fire, to sink into the abyss again ;  
Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
dwelt,  
And the long mountains ended in a coast  
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.  
There the pursuer could pursue no more,  
And he that fled no further fly the King ;  
And there, that day when the great light  
of heaven

Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,  
On the waste sand by the waste sea they  
closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight  
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the  
west.

A deathwhite mist slept over sand and  
sea :

Whereof the chill, to him who breathed  
it, drew

Down with his blood, till all his heart was  
cold

With formless fear ; and ev'n on Arthur  
fell

Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
fought.

For friend and foe were shadows in the  
mist,

And friend slew friend not knowing whom  
he slew ;

And some had visions out of golden  
youth,

And some beheld the faces of old ghosts  
Look in upon the battle ; and in the mist  
Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
And chance and craft and strength in  
single fights,

And ever and anon with host to host  
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the  
hard mail hewn,

Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands,  
the crash

Of battleaxes on shatter'd helms, and  
shrieks

After the Christ, of those who falling down  
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the  
mist ;

And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blas-  
phemies,

Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of  
the lungs

In that close mist, and cryings for the  
light,

Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after  
wall  
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death

Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that  
shore,

Save for some whisper of the seething seas,  
A dead hush fell ; but when the dolorous  
day

Grew drearier toward twilight falling,  
came

A bitter wind, clear from the North, and  
blew

The mist aside, and with that wind the tide  
Rose, and the pale King glanced across  
the field

Of battle : but no man was moving there ;  
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,  
Nor yet of heathen ; only the wan wave  
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro  
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and  
down

Tumbling the hollow helmets of the  
fallen,

And shiver'd brands that once had fought  
with Rome,

And rolling far along the gloomy shores  
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere,

And whiter than the mist that all day long  
Had held the field of battle was the King :

‘Hearest thou this great voice that  
shakes the world,

And wastes the narrow realm whereon we  
move,

And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
My dead, as tho’ they had not died for  
me?—

O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall’n  
Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.  
Behold, I seem but King among the dead.’

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere :

‘My King,  
King everywhere ! and so the dead have  
kings,

There also will I worship thee as King.  
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live  
Who love thee ; but who hates thee, he  
that brought

The heathen back among us, yonder  
stands,

Modred, unarm’d, the traitor of thine  
house.’

Then spake the King : ‘My house hath  
been my doom.

But call not thou this traitor of my house  
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with  
me.

My house are rather they who sware my  
vows,

Yea, even while they brake them, own’d  
me King.

And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,  
When all the purport of my throne hath  
fail’d,

That quick or dead thou holdest me for  
King.

King am I, whatsoever be their cry ;  
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou  
see

Yet, ere I pass.’ And uttering this the  
King

Made at the man : then Modred smote  
his liege

Hard on that helm which many a heathen  
sword

Had beaten thin ; while Arthur at one  
blow,

Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,  
Slew him, and all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll’d  
Among the mountains by the winter sea  
Until King Arthur’s Table, man by man,  
Had fall’n in Lyonesse about their lord,  
King Arthur. Then, because his wound  
was deep,

The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land :  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere :

‘The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights

Whereof this world holds record. Such  
a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think  
that we

Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again

To rule once more ; but, let what will be,  
be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride : for thou remem-  
berest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an  
arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd  
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king ;  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring  
me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :  
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
helm—

A little thing may harm a wounded man ;  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee  
word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he  
stept,  
And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient  
men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind  
sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excali-  
bur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the  
hilt :

For all the haft twinkled with diamond  
sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-  
vere :

'Hast thou perform'd my mission which  
I gave ?

What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast  
heard ?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :

'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale :

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy  
name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :

For surer sign had follow'd, either hand  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me  
word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the  
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he  
smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud :

'And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of  
many men.

What good should follow this, if this were  
done?

What harm, undone? Deep harm to  
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand

An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? But were this  
kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty  
kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excali-  
bur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the  
deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."

So might some old man speak in the after-  
time

To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honour and much fame  
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded  
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing  
heavily :

'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast  
heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much  
in wrath :

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !  
Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious  
hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee  
hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The  
great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the  
moon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter  
shock

By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.  
 So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
     ful,  
 And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd  
     him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the  
     mere.  
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
     thicker breath :  
 ' Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or  
     seen ? '

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
     vere :  
 ' Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the  
     gems  
 Should blind my purpose, for I never  
     saw,  
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,  
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheel-  
     ing him ;  
 But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonder-  
     ful,  
 That caught him by the hilt, and  
     brandish'd him  
 Three times, and drew him under in the  
     mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breath-  
     ing hard :  
 ' My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I  
     were gone.  
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
     weight,  
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall  
     die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half  
     rose,  
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
 And would have spoken, but he found  
     not words ;  
 Then took with care, and kneeling on  
     one knee,  
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
     hands,  
 And rising bore him thro' the place of  
     tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted  
     hard,  
 Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
 When all the house is mute. So sigh'd  
     the King,  
 Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
 ' Quick, quick !  
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'  
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge to  
     ridge,  
 Clothed with his breath, and looking, as  
     he walk'd,  
 Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
 He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
 Before. His own thought drove him like  
     a goad.  
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
 And barren chasms, and all to left and  
     right  
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,  
     as he based  
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
     heels—  
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky  
     barge,  
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
 Beneath them ; and descending they were  
     ware  
 That all the decks were dense with stately  
     forms,  
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream  
     —by these  
 Three Queens with crowns of gold : and  
     from them rose  
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
 And, as it were one voice, an agony



Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one  
comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the  
world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in  
the barge.'

So to the barge they came. There those  
three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King,  
and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining  
loud,

And dropping bitter tears against a brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face  
was white

And colourless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-  
ing east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with  
drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
curls—

That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd  
with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in  
rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot; and  
charged

Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir  
Bedivere:

'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my  
eyes?

For now I see the true old times are  
dead,

When every morning brought a noble  
chance,

And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.

Such times have been not since the light  
that led

The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole Round Table is dis-  
solved

Which was an image of the mighty world,  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the  
years,

Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the  
barge:

'The old order changeth, yielding place  
to new,

And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the  
world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done

May He within himself make pure! but  
thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are  
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore,  
let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of  
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call  
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of  
God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go  
(For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt)—

To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard  
lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and  
sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge of  
dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for ever-  
more,  
The stillness of the dead world's winter  
dawn  
Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The King  
is gone.'  
And therewithal came on him the weird  
rhyme,  
'From the great deep to the great deep  
he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly  
clomb  
The last hard footstep of that iron  
crag;

Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet,  
and cried,

'He passes to be King among the dead,  
And after healing of his grievous wound  
He comes again; but—if he come no  
more—

O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black  
boat,

Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three  
whereat we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with  
living light,

They stood before his throne in silence,  
friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about,  
and clomb

Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and  
saw,

Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare  
the King,

Down that long water opening on the deep  
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go  
From less to less and vanish into light.

And the new sun rose bringing the new  
year.

## TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee—  
Bear witness, that rememberable day,  
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the  
Prince  
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering life  
again  
From halfway down the shadow of the  
grave,  
Past with thee thro' thy people and their  
love,

And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'  
all

Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of  
man

And welcome! witness, too, the silent cry,  
The prayer of many a race and creed,  
and clime—

Thunderless lightnings striking under sea  
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,  
And that true North, whereof we lately  
heard

A strain to shame us 'keep you to your-  
selves ;

So loyal is too costly ! friends—your love  
Is but a burthen : loose the bond, and go.  
Is this the tone of empire ? here the faith  
That made us rulers ? this, indeed, her  
voice

And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoti-  
mont

Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven ?  
What shock has fool'd her since, that she  
should speak

So feebly ? wealthier—wealthier—hour  
by hour !

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,  
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her  
seas ?

*There* rang her voice, when the full city  
peal'd

Thee and thy Prince ! The loyal to their  
crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who love  
Our ocean-empire with her boundless  
homes

For ever-broadening England, and her  
throne

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,  
That knows not her own greatness : if  
she knows

And dreads it we are fall'n.—But thou,  
my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love  
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave  
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war  
with Soul,

Ideal manhood closed in real man,  
Rather than that gray king, whose name,  
a ghost,

Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from  
mountain peak,

And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still ;  
or him

Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's,  
one

Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time  
That hover'd between war and wanton-  
ness,

And crownings and dethronements : take  
withal

Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that  
Heaven

Will blow the tempest in the distance back  
From thine and ours : for some are scared,  
who mark,

Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,  
Waverings of every vane with every wind,  
And wordy trucklings to the transient  
hour,

And fierce or careless looseners of the  
faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of simple  
life,

Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,  
Or Labour, with a groan and not a voice,  
Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n from  
France,

And that which knows, but careful for  
itself,

And that which knows not, ruling that  
which knows

To its own harm : the goal of this great  
'world

Lies beyond sight : yet—if our slowly-  
grown

And crown'd Republic's crowning com-  
mon-sense,

That saved her many times, not fail—  
their fears

Are morning shadows huger than the  
shapes

That cast them, not those gloomier which  
forego

The darkness of that battle in the West,  
Where all of high and holy dies away.

# THE LOVER'S TALE

THE original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press.<sup>1</sup> One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—'The Golden Supper'?

*May, 1879.*

## ARGUMENT

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

### I

HERE far away, seen from the topmost  
cliff,

Filling with purple gloom the vacancies  
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas  
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down  
rare sails,

White as white clouds, floated from sky  
to sky.

Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,  
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,  
Where the chafed breakers of the outer  
sea

Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
And withers on the breast of peaceful love;  
Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
that fledged

The hills that watch'd thee, as Love  
watcheth Love,

In thine own essence, and delight thyself  
To make it wholly thine on sunny days.  
Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.'

See, sirs,

Even now the Goddess of the Past, that  
takes

The heart, and sometimes touches but  
one string

That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes  
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd  
chords

To some old melody, begins to play

That air which pleased her first. I feel  
thy breath;

I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye:  
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and tho'  
years

Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy  
strait

Betwixt the native land of Love and me,  
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail  
Will draw me to the rising of the sun,  
The lucid chambers of the morning star,  
And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
To pass my hand across my brows, and  
muse

On those dear hills, that never more will  
meet

The sight that throbs and aches beneath  
my touch,

As tho' there beat a heart in either eye;  
For when the outer lights are darken'd  
thus,

The memory's vision hath a keener edge.  
It grows upon me now—the semicircle  
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe  
Of curving beach—its wreaths of dripping  
green—

Its pale pink shells—the summerhouse  
aloft

That open'd on the pines with doors of  
glass,

A mountain nest—the pleasure-boat that  
 rock'd,  
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel to  
 keel,  
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave,  
 That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope !  
 They come, they crowd upon me all at  
 once—  
 Moved from the cloud of forgotten  
 things,  
 That sometimes on the horizon of the  
 mind  
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in  
 storm—  
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me—  
 days  
 Of dewy dawning and the amber eyes  
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I  
 Were borne about the bay or safely  
 moor'd  
 Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the  
 tide  
 Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs ; and all  
 without  
 The slowly-ridging rollers on the cliffs  
 Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro'  
 the arch  
 Down those loud waters, like a setting  
 star,  
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-  
 house shone,  
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
 Would often loiter in her balmy blue,  
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love  
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when day  
 hung  
 From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy  
 halls ;  
 Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,  
 Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her  
 lips,  
 Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
 Leapt like a passing thought across her  
 eyes ;  
 And mine with one that will not pass,  
 till earth

And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven,  
 a face  
 Most starry-fair, but kindled from within  
 As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-  
 hair'd, dark-eyed :  
 Oh, such dark eyes ! a single glance of  
 them  
 Will govern a whole life from birth to  
 death,  
 Careless of all things else, led on with light  
 In trances and in visions : look at them,  
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance ;  
 You cannot find their depth ; for they go  
 back,  
 And farther back, and still withdraw  
 themselves  
 Quite into the deep soul, that evermore  
 Fresh springing from her fountains in the  
 brain,  
 Still pouring thro', floods with redundant  
 life  
 Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago  
 I should have died, if it were possible  
 To die in gazing on that perfectness  
 Which I do bear within me : I had died,  
 But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,  
 Thine image, like a charm of light and  
 strength  
 Upon the waters, push'd me back again  
 On these deserted sands of barren life.  
 Tho' from the deep vault where the heart  
 of Hope  
 Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark—  
 Forgetting how to render beautiful  
 Her countenance with quick and health-  
 ful blood—  
 Thou didst not sway me upward ; could  
 I perish  
 While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,  
 Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's  
 quiet urn  
 For ever ? He, that saith it, hath o'er-  
 stept  
 The slippery footing of his narrow wit,  
 And fall'n away from judgment. Thou  
 art light,  
 To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers,  
 And length of days, and immortality

Of thought, and freshness ever self-renew'd.

For Time and Grief abode too long with Life,

And, like all other friends i' the world, at last

They grew weary of her fellowship :

So Time and Grief did beckon unto Death,

And Death drew nigh and beat the doors of Life ;

But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,  
A wakeful portress, and didst parle with Death,—

'This is a charmed dwelling which I hold' ;

So Death gave back, and would no further come.

Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
Nor in the present place. To me alone,  
Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,  
The Present is the vassal of the Past :  
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having been—  
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
Thrust forward on to-day and out of place ;

A body journeying onward, sick with toil,

The weight as if of age upon my limbs,  
The grasp of hopeless grief about my heart,

And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,  
Which long ago they had glean'd and garner'd up

Into the granaries of memory—

The clear brow, bulwark of the precious brain,

Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and all the while

The light soul twines and mingles with the growths

Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,  
Married, made one with, molten into all  
The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
And like the all-enduring camel, driven  
Far from the diamond fountain by the palms,

Who toils across the middle moonlit nights,

Or when the white heats of the blinding noons

Beat from the concave sand ; yet in him keeps

A draught of that sweet fountain that he loves,

To stay his feet from falling, and his spirit  
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,  
When I began to love. How should I tell you ?

Or from the after-fulness of my heart,  
Flow back again unto my slender spring  
And first of love, tho' every turn and depth

Between is clearer in my life than all  
Its present flow. Ye know not what ye ask.

How should the broad and open flower tell

What sort of bud it was, when, prest together

In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken folds,

It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,  
Yet was not the less sweet for that it seem'd ?

For young Life knows not when young Life was born,

But takes it all for granted : neither Love,  
Warm in the heart, his cradle, can remember

Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied,  
Looking on her that brought him to the light :

Or as men know not when they fall asleep  
Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
So know I not when I began to love.

This is my sum of knowledge—that my love

Grew with myself—say rather, was my growth,

My inward sap, the hold I have on earth,  
My outward circling air wherewith I breathe,

Which yet upholds my life, and evermore  
Is to me daily life and daily death :

For how should I have lived and not have loved ?



Can ye take off the sweetness from the flower,  
 The colour and the sweetness from the rose,  
 And place them by themselves ; or set apart  
 Their motions and their brightness from the stars,  
 And then point out the flower or the star?  
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,  
 And tell me where I am? 'Tis even thus :  
 In that I live I love ; because I love  
 I live : whate'er is fountain to the one  
 Is fountain to the other ; and whene'er  
 Our God unknots the riddle of the one,  
 There is no shade or fold of mystery  
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years,  
 (For they seem many and my most of life,  
 And well I could have linger'd in that porch,  
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-place,)  
 In the Maydews of childhood, opposite  
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived together,  
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father died,  
 And he was happy that he saw it not ;  
 But I and the first daisy on his grave  
 From the same clay came into light at once.

As Love and I do number equal years,  
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.  
 How like each other was the birth of each !

On the same morning, almost the same hour,  
 Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,  
 (Oh falsehood of all starcraft !) we were born.

How like each other was the birth of each !  
 The sister of my mother—she that bore  
 Camilla close beneath her beating heart,  
 Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,  
 With its true-touched pulses in the flow  
 And hourly visitation of the blood,  
 Sent notes of preparation manifold,

And mellow'd echoes of the outer-world—  
 My mother's sister, mother of my love,  
 Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,  
 One twofold mightier than the other was,  
 In giving so much beauty to the world,  
 And so much wealth as God had charged  
 her with—

Loathing to put it from herself for ever,  
 Left her own life with it ; and dying thus,  
 Crown'd with her highest act the placid face

And breathless body of her good deeds  
 past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She  
 was motherless  
 And I without a father. So from each  
 Of those two pillars which from earth  
 uphold  
 Our childhood, one had fallen away, and  
 all

The careful burthen of our tender years  
 Trembled upon the other. He that gave  
 Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd  
 All lovingkindnesses, all offices  
 Of watchful care and trembling tender-  
 ness.

He waked for both : he pray'd for both :  
 he slept

Dreaming of both : nor was his love the  
 less

Because it was divided, and shot forth  
 Boughs on each side, laden with whole-  
 some shade,

Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
 And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister : on one arm  
 The flaxen ringlets of our infancies  
 Wander'd, the while we rested ; one soft  
 lap

Pillow'd us both : a common light of eyes  
 Was on us as we lay : our baby lips,  
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence  
 The stream of life, one stream, one life,  
 one blood,

One sustenance, which, still as thought  
 grew large,

Still larger moulding all the house of  
 thought,

Made all our tastes and fancies like,  
perhaps—

All—all but one ; and strange to me,  
and sweet,

Sweet thro' strange years to know that  
whatsoe'er

Our general mother meant for me alone,

Our mutual mother dealt to both of us :

So what was earliest mine in earliest life,  
I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,

They tell me, was a very miracle

Of fellow-feeling and communion.

They tell me that we would not be alone,—

We cried when we were parted ; when I  
wept,

Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,  
Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow ; that we  
loved

The sound of one-another's voices more  
Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and  
learn'd

To lisp in tune together ; that we slept  
In the same cradle always, face to face.  
Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing  
lip,

Folding each other, breathing on each  
other,

Dreaming together (dreaming of each  
other

They should have added), till the morning  
light

Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy  
pane

Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke  
To gaze upon each other. If this be  
true,

At thought of which my whole soul  
languishes

And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath  
—as tho'

A man in some still garden should infuse  
Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
Till, drunk with its own wine, and over-  
full

Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
It falls on its own thorns—if this be true—

And that way my wish leads me evermore  
Still to believe it—'tis so sweet a thought,  
Why in the utter stillness of the soul

Doth question'd memory answer not, nor  
tell

Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,  
Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-  
mony ?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,  
Green prelude, April promise, glad new-  
year

Of Being, which with earliest violets  
And lavish carol of clear-throated larks  
Fill'd all the March of life !—I will not  
speak of thee,

These have not seen thee, these can never  
know thee,

They cannot understand me. Pass we  
then

A term of eighteen years. Ye would but  
laugh,

If I should tell you how I hoard in  
thought

The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient  
crones,

Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,  
Which are as gems set in my memory,  
Because she learnt them with me ; or  
what use

To know her father left us just before  
The daffodil was blown ? or how we  
found

The dead man cast upon the shore ? All  
this

Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds  
But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of  
mine

Is traced with flame. Move with me to  
the event.

There came a glorious morning, such a  
one

As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
On such a morning would have flung  
himself

From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
balanced wings

To some tall mountain : when I said to  
her,

'A day for Gods to stoop,' she answered,  
'Ay,

And men to soar': for as that other  
gazed,

Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,

The prophet and the chariot and the  
steeds,  
Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
Were drunk into the inmost blue, we  
stood,  
When first we came from out the pines at  
noon,  
With hands for eaves, uplooking and  
almost  
Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
heaven,  
So bathed we were in brilliance. Never  
yet  
Before or after have I known the spring  
Pour with such sudden deluges of light  
Into the middle summer ; for that day  
Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged  
the winds  
With spiced May-sweets from bound to  
bound, and blew  
Fresh fire into the sun, and from within  
Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent his  
soul  
Into the songs of birds, and touch'd far-  
off  
His mountain-altars, his high hills, with  
flame  
Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound :  
The great pine shook with lonely sounds  
of joy  
That came on the sea-wind. As moun-  
tain streams  
Our bloods ran free : the sunshine seem'd  
to brood  
More warmly on the heart than on the  
brow.  
We often paused, and, looking back, we  
saw  
The clefts and openings in the mountains  
fill'd  
With the blue valley and the glistening  
brooks,  
And all the low dark groves, a land of  
love !  
A land of promise, a land of memory,  
A land of promise flowing with the milk  
And honey of delicious memories !

And down to sea, and far as eye could  
ken,  
Each way from verge to verge a Holy  
Land,  
Still growing holier as you near'd the  
bay,  
For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd  
The grassy platform on some hill, I  
stoop'd,  
I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her  
brows  
And mine made garlands of the selfsame  
flower,  
Which she took smiling, and with my  
work thus  
Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or  
twice she told me  
(For I remember all things) to let grow  
The flowers that run poison in their veins:  
She said, ' The evil flourish in the world.'  
Then playfully she gave herself the lie—  
' Nothing in nature is unbeautiful ;  
So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So  
I wove  
Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem, ' whose  
flower,  
Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,  
Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,  
Is without sweetness, but who crowns  
himself  
Above the naked poisons of his heart  
In his old age.' A graceful thought of  
hers  
Grav'n on my fancy ! And oh, how like  
a nymph,  
A stately mountain nymph she look'd !  
how native  
Unto the hills she trod on ! While I  
gazed  
My coronal slowly disentwined itself  
And fell between us both ; tho' while I  
gazed  
My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of  
bliss  
That strike across the soul in prayer, and  
show us  
That we are surely heard. Methought a  
light

Burst from the garland I had wov'n, and  
stood

A solid glory on her bright black hair ;  
A light methought broke from her dark,  
dark eyes,

And shot itself into the singing winds ;  
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her white  
robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell about  
My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came

To what our people call 'The Hill of  
Woe.'

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from  
beneath

Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven  
chasm.

And thence one night, when all the winds  
were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)  
Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd  
himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,  
Fierce in the strength of far descent, a  
stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the  
chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown  
with crags :

We mounted slowly ; yet to both there  
came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking down  
On all that had look'd down on us ; and  
joy

In breathing nearer heaven ; and joy to  
me,

High over all the azure-circled earth,  
To breathe with her as if in heaven itself ;  
And more than joy that I to her became  
Her guardian and her angel, raising her  
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw  
Beneath her feet the region far away,  
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky  
brows,

Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,  
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,  
And steep-down walls of battlemented rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into  
spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,  
Whence rose as it were breath and steam  
of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting  
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush—  
and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the west,  
A purple range of mountain-cones, be-  
tween

Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point and standing  
both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that from  
beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,  
We paused amid the splendour. All the  
west

And ev'n unto the middle south was  
ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The  
sun below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave,  
shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
That various wilderness a tissue of light  
Unparallel'd. On the other side, the  
moon,

Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,  
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,  
Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes  
To indue his lustre ; most unloverlike,  
Since in his absence full of light and joy,  
And giving light to others. But this  
most,

Next to her presence whom I loved so  
well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart  
As to my outward hearing : the loud  
stream,

Forth issuing from his portals in the crag  
(A visible link unto the home of my  
heart),

Ran amber toward the west, and nigh  
the sea

Parting my own loved mountains was  
received,

Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy  
Of that small bay, which out to open  
main

Glow'd intermingling close beneath the  
sun.

Spirit of Love ! that little hour was bound  
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to  
thee :

Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,  
and the earth

They fell on became hallow'd evermore.

We turn'd : our eyes met : hers were  
bright, and mine

Were dim with floating tears, that shot  
the sunset

In lightnings round me ; and my name  
was borne

Upon her breath. Henceforth my name  
has been

A hallow'd memory like the names of old,  
A center'd, glory-circled memory,  
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not  
Exchange or currency : and in that hour  
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden  
mist

Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,  
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind  
shatter it,

Waver'd and floated—which was less  
than Hope,

Because it lack'd the power of perfect  
Hope ;

But which was more and higher than all  
Hope,

Because all other Hope had lower aim ;  
Even that this name to which her gracious  
lips

Did lend such gentle utterance, this one  
name,

In some obscure hereafter, might in-  
wreath

(How lovelier, nobler then !) her life, her  
love,

With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart  
and strength.

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd  
henceforth

The Hill of Hope' ; and I replied, 'O  
sister,

My will is one with thine ; the Hill of  
Hope.'

Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak : I could not speak my  
love.

Love lieth deep : Love dwells not in lip-  
depths.

Love wraps his wings on either side the  
heart,

Constraining it with kisses close and warm,  
Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
So that they pass not to the shrine of  
sound.

Else had the life of that delighted hour  
Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
Of Love ; but how should Earthly mea-  
sure mete

The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited  
Love,

Who scarce can tune his high majestic  
sense

Unto the thundersong that wheels the  
spheres,

Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
And flowing odour of the spacious air,  
Scarce housed within the circle of this  
Earth,

Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
Which pass with that which breathes  
them ? Sooner Earth

Might go round Heaven, and the strait  
girth of Time

Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy  
hour,

Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day !  
O Genius of that hour which dost uphold  
Thy coronal of glory like a God,

Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
Who walk before thee, ever turning round  
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim  
With dwelling on the light and depth of  
thine,

Thy name is ever worshipp'd among  
 hours !  
 Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,  
 For bliss stood round me like the light of  
 Heaven,—  
 Had I died then, I had not known the  
 death ;  
 Yea had the Power from whose right  
 hand the light  
 Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand  
 floweth  
 The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-  
 ences,  
 Whereof to all that draw the wholesome  
 air,  
 Somewhere the one must overflow the  
 other ;  
 Then had he stemm'd my day with night,  
 and driven  
 My current to the fountain whence it  
 sprang,—  
 Even his own abiding excellence—  
 On me, methinks, that shock of gloom  
 had fall'n  
 Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
 The other, like the sun I gazed upon,  
 Which seeming for the moment due to  
 death,  
 And dipping his head low beneath the  
 verge,  
 Yet bearing round about him his own day,  
 In confidence of unabated strength,  
 Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven, from  
 light to light,  
 And holdeth his undimmed forehead far  
 Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward  
 hill ;  
 We past from light to dark. On the  
 other side  
 Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,  
 Which none have fathom'd. If you go  
 far in  
 (The country people rumour) you may  
 hear  
 The moaning of the woman and the child,  
 Shut in the secret chambers of the rock,  
 I too have heard a sound—perchance of  
 streams

Running far on within its inmost halls,  
 The home of darkness ; but the cavern-  
 mouth,  
 Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,  
 Gives birth to a brawling brook, that  
 passing lightly  
 Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,  
 Is presently received in a sweet grave  
 Of eglantines, a place of burial  
 Far lovelier than its cradle ; for unseen,  
 But taken with the sweetness of the place,  
 It makes a constant bubbling melody  
 That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower  
 down  
 Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding,  
 leaves  
 Low banks of yellow sand ; and from the  
 woods  
 That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-  
 presses,—  
 Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,  
 That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,  
 And sitting down upon the golden moss,  
 Held converse sweet and low—low con-  
 verse sweet,  
 In which our voices bore least part. The  
 wind  
 Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd  
 The waters, and the waters answering  
 lisp'd  
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,  
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again  
 To utterance of passion. Ye cannot  
 shape  
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
 Methought all excellence that ever was  
 Had drawn herself from many thousand  
 years,  
 And all the separate Edens of this earth,  
 To centre in this place and time. I  
 listen'd,  
 And her words stole with most prevailing  
 sweetness  
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies come  
 To boys and girls when summer days are  
 new,  
 And soul and heart and body are all at  
 ease :



What marvel my Camilla told me all?  
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,  
And I was as the brother of her blood,  
And by that name I moved upon her  
breath;

Dear name, which had too much of near-  
ness in it

And heralded the distance of this time!  
At first her voice was very sweet and low,  
As if she were afraid of utterance;  
But in the onward current of her speech,  
(As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks  
Are fashion'd by the channel which they  
keep),

Her words did of their meaning borrow  
sound,

Her cheek did catch the colour of her  
words.

I heard and trembled, yet I could but  
hear;

My heart paused—my raised eyelids  
would not fall,

But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
I seem'd the only part of Time stood still,  
And saw the motion of all other things;  
While her words, syllable by syllable,  
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
Fell; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not  
to speak;

But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
What marvel my Camilla told me all  
Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love—  
'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd.' Even  
then the stars

Did tremble in their stations as I gazed;  
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,  
No wish—no hope. Hope was not wholly  
dead,

But breathing hard at the approach of  
Death,—

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
No longer in the dearest sense of mine—  
For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
And all the maiden empire of her mind,  
Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
There, where I hoped myself to reign as  
king,

There, where that day I crown'd myself  
as king,

There in my realm and even on my throne,

*Another!* then it seem'd as tho' a link  
Of some tight chain within my inmost  
frame

Was riven in twain: that life I heeded not  
Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the  
grave,

The darkness of the grave and utter night,  
Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,  
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death.

Then had the earth beneath me yawn-  
ing cloven

With such a sound as when an iceberg  
splits

From cope to base—had Heaven from  
all her doors,

With all her golden thresholds clashing,  
roll'd

Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as  
dead,

Mute, blind and motionless as then I lay;  
Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
for me!

Mute, for henceforth what use were  
words to me!

Blind, for the day was as the night to  
me!

The night to me was kinder than the  
day;

The night in pity took away my day,  
Because my grief as yet was newly born  
Of eyes too weak to look upon the light;  
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
Frail Life was startled from the tender  
love

Of him she brooded over. Would I had  
lain

Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound  
Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier  
had driven

Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining  
brows,

Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.  
The wind had blown above me, and the  
rain

Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded snake  
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of  
Love,

But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me. All  
 too soon  
 Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,  
 Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude  
 With proffer of unwish'd-for services)  
 Entering all the avenues of sense  
 Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
 With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.  
 And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
 brook  
 Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd  
 to hear  
 Its murmur, as the drowning seaman  
 hears,  
 Who with his head below the surface  
 dropt  
 Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
 Of the confused floods, and dimly knows  
 His head shall rise no more : and then  
 came in  
 The white light of the weary moon  
 above,  
 Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.  
 Was my sight drunk that it did shape to  
 me  
 Him who should own that name? Were  
 it not well  
 If so be that the echo of that name  
 Ringing within the fancy had updrawn  
 A fashion and a phantasm of the form  
 It should attach to? Phantom!—had  
 the ghastliest  
 That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
 The foul steam of the grave to thicken  
 by it,  
 There in the shuddering moonlight  
 brought its face  
 And what it has for eyes—as close to  
 mine  
 As he did—better than his, than he  
 The friend, the neighbour, Lionel, the  
 beloved,  
 The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
 The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,  
 All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.  
 O how her choice did leap forth from his  
 eyes !  
 O how her love did clothe itself in smiles  
 About his lips ! and—not one moment's  
 grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon  
 my head  
 To come my way ! to twit me with the  
 cause !  
  
 Was not the land as free thro' all her  
 ways  
 To him as me? Was not his wont to  
 walk  
 Between the going light and growing  
 night?  
 Had I not learnt my loss before he came?  
 Could that be more because he came my  
 way?  
 Why should he not come my way if he  
 would?  
 And yet to-night, to-night—when all my  
 wealth  
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell  
 Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he come  
 my way  
 Robed in those robes of light I must not  
 wear,  
 With that great crown of beams about his  
 brows—  
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,  
 To tell him of the bliss he had with  
 God—  
 Come like a careless and a greedy heir  
 That scarce can wait the reading of the  
 will  
 Before he takes possession? Was mine  
 a mood  
 To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
 A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,  
 Unspeakable? I was shut up with  
 Grief;  
 She took the body of my past delight,  
 Narded and swathed and balm'd it for  
 herself,  
 And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
 Never to rise again. I was led mute  
 Into her temple like a sacrifice;  
 I was the High Priest in her holiest  
 place,  
 Not to be loudly broken in upon.  
  
 Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy as  
 these well-nigh  
 O'erbore the limits of my brain : but he

Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm up-  
stay'd.

I thought it was an adder's fold, and once  
I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd,  
Being so feeble: she bent above me, too;  
Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er of  
bright

Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made  
The red rose there a pale one—and her  
eyes—

I saw the moonlight glitter on their  
tears—

And some few drops of that distressful  
rain

Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and  
brush'd

My fallen forehead in their to and fro,  
For in the sudden anguish of her heart  
Loosed from their simple thrall they had  
flow'd abroad,

And floated on and parted round her neck,  
Mantling her form halfway. She, when  
I woke,

Something she ask'd, I know not what,  
and ask'd,

Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for the  
sound

Of that dear voice so musically low,  
And now first heard with any sense of  
pain,

As it had taken life away before,  
Choked all the syllables; that strove to  
rise

From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
From his great hoard of happiness dis-  
till'd

Some drops of solace; like a vain rich  
man,

That, having always prosper'd in the  
world,

Folding his hands, deals comfortable  
words

To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in  
truth,

Fair speech was his and delicate of  
phrase,

Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-  
dress'd

More to the inward than the outward  
ear,

As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,  
Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the  
green

Of the dead spring: but mine was wholly  
dead,

No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for  
me.

Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
wrong?

And why was I to darken their pure love,  
If, as I found, they two did love each  
other,

Because my own was darken'd? Why  
was I

To cross between their happy star and  
them?

To stand a shadow by their shining doors,  
And vex them with my darkness? Did  
I love her?

Ye know that I did love her; to this  
present

My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did  
I love her,

And could I look upon her tearful eyes?  
What had *she* done to weep? Why  
should *she* weep?

O innocent of spirit—let my heart  
Break rather—whom the gentlest airs of  
Heaven

Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.  
Her love did murder mine? What then?

She deem'd

I wore a brother's mind: she call'd me  
brother:

She told me all her love: she shall not  
weep.

The brightness of a burning thought,  
awhile

In battle with the glooms of my dark will,  
Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up

There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe  
Reflex of action. Starting up at once,

As from a dismal dream of my own death,  
I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;

I, for I loved her, grasp'd the hand she lov'd,

And laid it in her own, and sent my cry  
Thro' the blank night to Him who loving  
made

The happy and the unhappy love, that He  
Would hold the hand of blessing over them,  
Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his  
bride !

Let them so love that men and boys may  
say,

'Lo ! how they love each other !' till  
their love

Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
Known, when their faces are forgot in  
the land—

One golden dream of love, from which  
may death

Awake them with heaven's music in a life  
More living to some happier happiness,  
Swallowing its precedent in victory.

And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—  
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,  
They will but sicken the sick plant the  
more.

Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,  
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do ;  
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream  
but how

I could have loved thee, had there been  
none else

To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I  
spake,

When I beheld her weep so ruefully ;  
For sure my love should ne'er indue the  
front

And mask of Hate, who lives on others'  
moans.

Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter  
draughts,

And batten on her poisons? Love forbid !  
Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
Hate,

And Hate is strange beneath the roof of  
Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these  
tears

Shed for the love of Love ; for tho' mine  
image,

The subject of thy power, be cold in her,

Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the  
source

Of these sad tears, and feeds their down-  
ward flow.

So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to  
death,

Received unto himself a part of blame,  
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,  
Who, when the woful sentence hath been  
past,

And all the clearness of his fame hath gone  
Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,  
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
awaked,

And looking round upon his tearful friends,  
Forthwith and in his agony conceives  
A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime—  
For whence without some guilt should  
such grief be ?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
abysm

Of forms outworn, but not to me outworn,  
Who never hail'd another—was there  
one ?

There might be one—one other, worth  
the life

That made it sensible. So that hour died  
Like odour rapt into the winged wind  
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built,  
that they,

They—when their love is wreck'd—if  
Love can wreck—

On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride  
highly

Above the perilous seas of Change and  
Chance ;

Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheer-  
fulness ;

As the tall ship, that many a dreary year  
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at sea,  
All thro' the livelong hours of utter dark,  
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous  
wave.

For me—what light, what gleam on those  
black ways

Where Love could walk with banish'd  
Hope no more ?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters fair ;  
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the  
 neck of Hope,  
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew  
 in her breath  
 In that close kiss, and drank her  
 whisper'd tales.  
 They said that Love would die when  
 Hope was gone,  
 And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
 after Hope ;  
 At last she sought out Memory, and they  
 trod  
 The same old paths where Love had  
 walk'd with Hope,  
 And Memory fed the soul of Love with  
 tears.

## II

FROM that time forth I would not see  
 her more ;  
 But many weary moons I lived alone—  
 Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.  
 Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea  
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,  
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
 sands  
 Insensibly I drew her name, until  
 The meaning of the letters shot into  
 My brain ; anon the wanton billow wash'd  
 Them over, till they faded like my love.  
 The hollow caverns heard me—the black  
 brooks  
 Of the midforest heard me—the soft  
 winds,  
 Laden with thistledown and seeds of  
 flowers,  
 Paused in their course to hear me, for my  
 voice  
 Was all of thee : the merry linnet knew  
 me,  
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragonfly  
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.  
 The rough brier tore my bleeding palms ;  
 the hemlock,  
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I  
 past ;  
 Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,  
 -Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end ?  
 Why grew we then together in one plot ?  
 Why fed we from one fountain ? drew  
 one sun ?  
 Why were our mothers' branches of one  
 stem ?  
 Why were we one in all things, save in  
 that  
 Where to have been one had been the  
 cope and crown  
 Of all I hoped and fear'd ?—if that same  
 nearness  
 Were father to this distance, and that  
 one  
 Vauntcourier to this *double* ? if Affection  
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy hew'd  
 out  
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy ?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill  
 Where last we roam'd together, for the  
 sound  
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the  
 wind  
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells.  
 Sometimes  
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-  
 cones  
 That spired above the wood ; and with  
 mad hand  
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-  
 screen,  
 I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,  
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd from  
 my sight  
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-  
 tines :  
 And all the fragments of the living rock  
 (Huge blocks, which some old trembling  
 of the world  
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they  
 fell  
 Half-digging their own graves) these in  
 my agony  
 Did I make bare of all the golden moss,  
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the  
 spring  
 Had liveried them all over. In my  
 brain

The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to thought,  
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist : my blood  
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my languid limbs ;  
 The motions of my heart seem'd far within me,  
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses ;  
 And yet it shook me, that my frame would shudder,  
 As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.  
 But over the deep graves of Hope and Fear,  
 And all the broken palaces of the Past,  
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-shock'd,—  
 Hung round with ragged rims and burning folds,—  
 Embathing all with wild and woful hues,  
 Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses  
 Of thundershaken columns indistinct,  
 And fused together in the tyrannous light—  
 Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me !

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no more,  
 Some one had told me she was dead,  
 and ask'd  
 If I would see her burial : then I seem'd  
 To rise, and through the forest-shadow borne  
 With more than mortal swiftness, I ran down  
 The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
 The rear of a procession, curving round  
 The silver-sheeted bay : in front of which  
 Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare  
 A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest lawn,  
 Wreathed round the bier with garlands :  
 in the distance,  
 From out the yellow woods upon the hill  
 Look'd forth the summit and the pinacles  
 Of a gray steeple—thence at intervals

A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
 Save those six virgins which upheld the bier,  
 Were stoled from head to foot in flowing black ;  
 One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd his brow,  
 And he was loud in weeping and in praise  
 Of her, we follow'd : a strong sympathy  
 Shook all my soul : I flung myself upon him  
 In tears and cries : I told him all my love,  
 How I had loved her from the first ;  
 whereat  
 He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow drew back  
 His hand to push me from him ; and the face,  
 The very face and form of Lionel  
 Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost brain,  
 And at his feet I seem'd to faint and fall,  
 To fall and die away. I could not rise  
 Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,  
 The lordly Phantasms ! in their floating folds  
 They past and were no more : but I had fallen  
 Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Always the inaudible invisible thought,  
 Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
 Shaped by the audible and visible,  
 Moulded the audible and visible ;  
 All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and wind,  
 Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain ;  
 The cloud-pavilion'd element, the wood,  
 The mountain, the three cypresses, the cave,  
 Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the moon  
 Below black firs, when silent-creeping winds  
 Laid the long night in silver streaks and bars,  
 Were wrought into the tissue of my dream :  
 The moanings in the forest, the loud brook,



Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-  
hawk-whirr

Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,  
And voices in the distance calling to me  
And in my vision bidding me dream on,  
Like sounds without the twilight realm  
of dreams,

Which wander round the bases of the  
hills,

And murmur at the low-dropt eaves of  
sleep,

Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end  
Opening on darkness, stately vestibules  
To caves and shows of Death : whether  
the mind,

With some revenge—even to itself un-  
known,—

Made strange division of its suffering  
With her, whom to have suffering view'd  
had been

Extremest pain ; or that the clear-eyed  
Spirit,

Being blunted in the Present, grew at  
length

Prophetical and prescient of whate'er  
The Future had in store : or that which  
most

Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit  
Was of so wide a compass it took in  
All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
Anguish intolerable.

The day waned ;

Alone I sat with her : about my brow  
Her warm breath floated in the utterance  
Of silver-chorded tones : her lips were  
sunder'd

With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke  
in light

Like morning from her eyes—her elo-  
quent eyes,

(As I have seen them many a hundred  
times)

Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine  
down rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendours. As a  
vision

Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
In damp and dismal dungeons under-  
ground,

Confined on points of faith, when strength  
is shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of worse  
Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,  
All unawares before his half-shut eyes,  
Comes in upon him in the dead of night,  
And with the excess of sweetness and of  
awe,

Makes the heart tremble, and the sight  
run over

Upon his steely gyves ; so those fair eyes  
Shone on my darkness, forms which ever  
stood

Within the magic cirque of memory,  
Invisible but deathless, waiting still  
The edict of the will to reassume  
The semblance of those rare realities  
Of which they were the mirrors. Now  
the light

Which was their life, burst through the  
cloud of thought

Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I spake,  
Hung round with paintings of the sea,  
and one

A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow  
Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin  
wind

In her sail roaring. From the outer day,  
Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad  
And solid beam of isolated light,  
Crowded with driving atomies, and fell  
Slanting upon that picture, from prime  
youth

Well-known well-loved. She drew it  
long ago

Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,  
One morning when the upblown billow  
ran

Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had  
pour'd

Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms  
Colour and life : it was a bond and seal  
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful  
smiles ;

A monument of childhood and of love ;  
 The poesy of childhood ; my lost love  
 Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it  
 together  
 In mute and glad remembrance, and  
 each heart  
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing  
 like  
 The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-  
 couch'd—  
 A beauty which is death ; when all at  
 once  
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,  
 Began to heave upon that painted sea ;  
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,  
 made the ground  
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life  
 And breath and motion, past and flow'd  
 away  
 To those unreal billows : round and  
 round  
 A whirlwind caught and bore us ; mighty  
 gyres  
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-  
 driven  
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she  
 shriek'd ;  
 My heart was cloven with pain ; I wound  
 my arms  
 About her : we whirl'd giddily ; the wind  
 Sung ; but I clasp'd her without fear :  
 her weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim  
 eyes,  
 And parted lips which drank her breath,  
 down-hung  
 The jaws of Death : I, groaning, from  
 me flung  
 Her empty phantom : all the sway and  
 whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
 ever.

## III

I CAME one day and sat among the  
 stones  
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning  
 cave ;

A morning air, sweet after rain, ran  
 over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and  
 blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells of  
 bud  
 And foliage from the dark and dripping  
 woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook and  
 throbb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what  
 height  
 The day had grown I know not. Then  
 came on me  
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd his  
 brow.  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen  
 bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the  
 shore  
 Sloped into louder surf : those that went  
 with me,  
 And those that held the bier before my  
 face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about the  
 bay,  
 Trod swifter steps ; and while I walk'd  
 with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change, I  
 thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to ring,  
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage-  
 bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on  
 peal—  
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-  
 bells.  
 Then those who led the van, and those  
 in rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-  
 chanals  
 Fled onward to the steeple in the  
 woods :  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the  
 blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids : all at once  
 The front rank made a sudden halt ; the  
 bells

Lapsed into frightful stillness; the surge  
 fell  
 From thunder into whispers; those six  
 maids  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on the  
 sand  
 Threw down the bier; the woods upon  
 the hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweeping  
 down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew it  
 far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas: I turn'd: my  
 heart  
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the  
 hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading  
 flowers.  
 But she from out her death-like chrysalis,  
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my  
 love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her  
 hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose—a  
 light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips—her  
 eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd  
 the hill.  
 One hand she reach'd to those that came  
 behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured to  
 take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood with  
 me  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down his  
 robes,  
 And claspt her hand in his: again the  
 bells  
 Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy  
 surf  
 Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirling  
 rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance, and  
 fled  
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the  
 woods,

Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.

There, there, my latest vision—then the  
 event!

## IV

THE GOLDEN SUPPER<sup>1</sup>

(*Another speaks*)

HE flies the event: he leaves the event  
 to me:  
 Poor Julian—how he rush'd away; the  
 bells,  
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and  
 heart—  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
 As who should say 'Continue.' Well  
 he had  
 One golden hour—of triumph shall I say?  
 Solace at least—before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour  
 of his!  
 He moved thro' all of it majestically—  
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close—  
 but now—

Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-  
 bells,  
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
 I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl  
 Were wedded, and our Julian came  
 again  
 Back to his mother's house among the  
 pines.  
 But these, their gloom, the mountains and  
 the Bay,  
 The whole land weigh'd him down as  
 Ætna does  
 The Giant of Mythology: he would go,  
 Would leave the land for ever, and had  
 gone  
 Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not yet,'  
 Some warning—sent divinely—as it  
 seem'd

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 476.

By that which follow'd—but of this I  
 deem  
 As of the visions that he told—the event  
 Glanced back upon them in his after  
 life,  
 And partly made them—tho' he knew it  
 not.

And thus he stay'd and would not look  
 at her—  
 No not for months: but, when the  
 eleventh moon  
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and  
 said,  
 Would you could toll me out of life, but  
 found—

All softly as his mother broke it to him—  
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear,  
 For that low knell tolling his lady dead—  
 Dead—and had lain three days without  
 a pulse:

All that look'd on her had pronounced  
 her dead.

And so they bore her (for in Julian's land  
 They never nail a dumb head up in  
 elm),

Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
 heaven,  
 And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die: he is here  
 and hale—

Not plunge headforemost from the moun-  
 tain there,

And leave the name of Lover's Leap:  
 not he:

He knew the meaning of the whisper now,  
 Thought that he knew it. 'This, I stay'd  
 for this;

O love, I have not seen you for so long.  
 Now, now, will I go down into the grave,  
 I will be all alone with all I love,  
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his no  
 more:

The dead returns to me, and I go down  
 To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so  
 He rose and went, and entering the dim  
 vault,

And, making there a sudden light, beheld  
 All round about him that which all will  
 be.

The light was but a flash, and went again.  
 Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
 His lady with the moonlight on her face;  
 Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
 Of black and bands of silver, which the  
 moon

Struck from an open grating overhead  
 High in the wall, and all the rest of her  
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the  
 vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass, to  
 sleep,

To rest, to be with her—till the great  
 day

Peal'd on us with that music which rights  
 all,

And raised us hand in hand.' And  
 kneeling there

Down in the dreadful dust that once was  
 man,

Dust, as he said, that once was loving  
 hearts,

Hearts that had beat with such a love as  
 mine—

Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
 her—

He softly put his arm about her neck  
 And kiss'd her more than once, till help-  
 less death

And silence made him bold—nay, but I  
 wrong him,

He revered his dear lady even in  
 death;

But, placing his true hand upon her  
 heart,

'O, you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not  
 even death

Can chill you all at once': then starting,  
 thought

His dreams had come again. 'Do I  
 wake or sleep?

Or am I made immortal, or my love  
 Mortal once more?' It beat—the heart

—it beat:

Faint—but it beat: at which his own  
 began

To pulse with such a vehemence that it  
drown'd

The feebler motion underneath his hand.  
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,  
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,  
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak  
He came in, and now striding fast, and  
now

Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,  
So bore her thro' the solitary land  
Back to the mother's house where she  
was born.

There the good mother's kindly minis-  
tering,  
With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
Her fluttering life : she rais'd an eye that  
ask'd  
'Where?' till the things familiar to her  
youth  
Had made a silent answer : then she spoke  
'Here ! and how came I here ?' and  
learning it  
(They told her somewhat rashly as I  
think)

At once began to wander and to wail,  
'Ay, but you know that you must give  
me back :  
Send ! bid him come' ; but Lionel was  
away—  
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none  
knew where.

'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and goes'  
—a wail  
That seeming something, yet was nothing,  
born

Not from believing mind, but shatter'd  
nerve,  
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof  
At some precipitance in her burial.  
Then, when her own true spirit had  
return'd,

'Oh yes, and you,' she said, 'and none  
but you ?  
For you have given me life and love again,  
And none but you yourself shall tell him  
of it,  
And you shall give me back when he  
returns.'

'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,  
'here,

And keep yourself, none knowing, to  
yourself ;

And I will do your will. I may not stay,  
No, not an hour ; but send me notice of  
him

When he returns, and then will I return,  
And I will make a solemn offering of you  
To him you love.' And faintly she  
replied,

'And I will do *your* will, and none shall  
know.'

Not know ? with such a secret to be  
known.

But all their house was old and loved  
them both,

And all the house had known the loves  
of both ;

Had died almost to serve them any way,  
And all the land was waste and solitary :  
And then he rode away ; but after this,  
An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
There fever seized upon him : myself was  
then

Travelling that land, and meant to rest  
an hour ;

And sitting down to such a base repast,  
It makes me angry yet to speak of it—  
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd  
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was  
vile)

And in a loft, with none to wait on him,  
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
Raving of dead men's dust and beating  
hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush !  
But there from fever and my care of him  
Sprang up a friendship that may help us  
yet.

For while we roam'd along the dreary  
coast,

And waited for her message, piece by piece  
I learnt the drearier story of his life ;  
And, tho' he loved and honour'd Lionel,  
Found that the sudden wail his lady  
made

Dwelt in his fancy : did he know her  
worth,

Her beauty even? should he not be taught,  
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
The value of that jewel he had to guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we past,  
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the  
soul :

*That* makes the sequel pure ; tho' some  
of us

Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
Not such am I : and yet I say the bird  
That will not hear my call, however  
sweet,

But if my neighbour whistle answers  
him—

What matter? there are others in the  
wood.

Yet when I saw her (and I thought him  
crazed,

Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of  
hers—

Oh ! such dark eyes ! and not her eyes  
alone,

But all from these to where she touch'd  
on earth,

For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
To greet us, her young hero in her arms !  
'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me  
life again.

He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
His other father you ! Kiss him, and then  
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart !  
his own

Sent such a flame into his face, I knew  
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him  
there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,  
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him  
By that great love they both had borne  
the dead,

To come and revel for one hour with him  
Before he left the land for evermore ;

And then to friends—they were not many  
—who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of  
his,

And bad them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast : I  
never

Sat at a costlier ; for all round his hall  
From column on to column, as in a  
wood,

Not such as here—an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd ;  
and beneath,

Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven  
knows when,

Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten  
sun,

And kept it thro' a hundred years of  
gloom,

Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round in  
gold—

Others of glass as costly—some with  
gems

Moveable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value—Ah  
heavens !

Why need I tell you all ?—suffice to say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest : and they,  
the guests,

Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's  
eyes

(I told you that he had his golden hour),  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd

To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his  
And that resolved self-exile from a land

He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n

than rich,  
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.



And stranger yet, at one end of the  
hall  
Two great funereal curtains, looping down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid the  
frame.  
And just above the parting was a lamp :  
So the sweet figure folded round with  
night  
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a  
smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate  
and drank,  
And might—the wines being of such  
nobleness—  
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about it  
all :  
What was it ? for our lover seldom spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats ; but ever and  
anon  
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use ;  
And when the feast was near an end, he  
said :

'There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends—  
I read of it in Persia—when a man  
Will honour those who feast with him,  
he brings  
And shows them whatsoever he accounts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.  
This custom—'

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with  
meeting hands  
And cries about the banquet—'Beautiful !  
Who could desire more beauty at a feast ?'

The lover answer'd, 'There is more  
than one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not  
Before my time, but hear me to the close.  
This custom steps yet further when the  
guest  
Is loved and honour'd to the uttermost.

For after he hath shown him gems or gold,  
He brings and sets before him in rich  
guise  
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his heart—  
"O my heart's lord, would I could show  
you," he says,  
"Ev'n my heart too." And I propose  
to-night  
To show you what is dearest to my heart,  
And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.  
I knew a man, nor many years ago ;  
He had a faithful servant, one who loved  
His master more than all on earth beside.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on  
death,  
His master would not wait until he died,  
But bad his menials bear him from the  
door,  
And leave him in the public way to die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took him  
home,  
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
his life.  
I ask you now, should this first master  
claim  
His service, whom does it belong to ?  
him  
Who thrust him out, or him who saved  
his life ?'

This question, so flung down before  
the guests,  
And balanced either way by each, at  
length  
When some were doubtful how the law  
would hold,  
Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
phrase.  
And he beginning languidly—his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as he  
went,  
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,  
Affirming that as long as either lived,

By all the laws of love and gratefulness,  
 The service of the one so saved was due  
 All to the saver—adding, with a smile,  
 The first for many weeks—a semi-smile  
 As at a strong conclusion—‘body and  
     soul  
 And life and limbs, all his to work his will.’

Then Julian made a secret sign to me  
 To bring Camilla down before them all.  
 And crossing her own picture as she came,  
 And looking as much lovelier as herself  
 Is lovelier than all others—on her head  
 A diamond circlet, and from under this  
 A veil, that seemed no more than gilded  
     air,  
 Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze  
 With seeds of gold—so, with that grace  
     of hers,

Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,  
 That flings a mist behind it in the sun—  
 And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,  
 The younger Julian, who himself was  
     crown’d

With roses, none so rosy as himself—  
 And over all her babe and her the jewels  
 Of many generations of his house  
 Sparkled and flash’d, for he had decked  
     them out

As for a solemn sacrifice of love—  
 So she came in :—I am long in telling it,  
 I never yet beheld a thing so strange,  
 Sad, sweet, and strange together—floated  
     in—

While all the guests in mute amazement  
     rose—

And slowly pacing to the middle hall,  
 Before the board, there paused and stood,  
     her breast

Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,  
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.  
 But him she carried, him nor lights nor  
     feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ; who  
     cared

Only to use his own, and staring wide  
 And hungering for the gilt and jewell’d  
     world

About him, look’d, as he is like to prove,  
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

‘My guests,’ said Julian : ‘you are  
     honour’d now

Ev’n to the uttermost : in her behold  
 Of all my treasures the most beautiful,  
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to me.  
 Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,  
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,  
 And heard him muttering, ‘So like, so  
     like ;

She never had a sister. I knew none.  
 Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so  
     like !’

And then he suddenly ask’d her if she  
     were.

She shook, and cast her eyes down, and  
     was dumb.

And then some other question’d if she  
     came

From foreign lands, and still she did not  
     speak.

Another, if the boy were hers : but she  
 To all their queries answer’d not a word,  
 Which made the amazement more, till  
     one of them

Said, shuddering, ‘Her spectre !’ But  
     his friend

Replied, in half a whisper, ‘Not at least  
 The spectre that will speak if spoken to.  
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
     dumb !’

But Julian, sitting by her, answer’d all :  
 ‘She is but dumb, because in her you  
     see

That faithful servant whom we spoke  
     about,

Obedient to her second master now ;  
 Which will not last. I have here to-night  
     a guest

So bound to me by common love and  
     loss—

What ! shall I bind him more ? in his  
     behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him  
 That which of all things is the dearest to  
     me,

Not only showing? and he himself pronounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

'Now all be dumb, and promise all of you

Not to break in on what I say by word  
Or whisper, while I show you all my heart.'

And then began the story of his love

As here to-day, but not so wordily—

The passionate moment would not suffer that—

Past thro' his visions to the burial; thence  
Down to this last strange hour in his own hall;

And then rose up, and with him all his guests

Once more as by enchantment; all but he,  
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,  
And sat as if in chains—to whom he said:

'Take my free gift, my cousin, for your wife;

And were it only for the giver's sake,  
And tho' she seem so like the one you lost,  
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
Lest there be none left here to bring her back:

I leave this land for ever.' Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,  
And bearing on one arm the noble babe,  
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.  
And there the widower husband and dead wife

Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather seem'd

For some new death than for a life renew'd;  
Whereat the very babe began to wail;  
At once they turn'd, and caught and brought him in

To their charm'd circle, and, half killing him

With kisses, round him closed and claspt again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed himself  
From wife and child, and lifted up a face  
All over glowing with the sun of life,  
And love, and boundless thanks—the sight of this

So frighted our good friend, that turning to me

And saying, 'It is over: let us go'—

There were our horses ready at the doors—

We bad them no farewell, but mounting these

He past for ever from his native land;

And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

## TO ALFRED TENNYSON,

MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,

Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,

Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,  
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,  
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,  
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.

May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

## THE FIRST QUARREL

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

I

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure it 'll all come right,'

But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white:

Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't to wait for long.

Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—No, no, you are doing me wrong!

Harry and I were married: the boy can hold up his head,

The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;

I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to the end.

I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

II

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.

When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife:

I was happy when I was with him, an'  
 sorry when he was away,  
 An' when we play'd together, I loved him  
 better than play;  
 He workt me the daisy chain—he made  
 me the cowslip ball,  
 He fought the boys that were rude, an' I  
 loved him better than all.  
 Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at  
 home in disgrace,  
 I never could quarrel with Harry—I had  
 but to look in his face.

## III

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's  
 kin, that had need  
 Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent,  
 an' the father agreed;  
 So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire  
 farm for years an' for years;  
 I walked with him down to the quay,  
 poor lad, an' we parted in tears.  
 The boat was beginning to move, we  
 heard them a-ringing the bell,  
 'I'll never love any but you, God bless  
 you, my own little Nell.'

## IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he  
 came to harm;  
 There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with  
 him up at the farm,  
 One had deceived her an' left her alone  
 with her sin an' her shame,  
 And so she was wicked with Harry; the  
 girl was the most to blame.

## V

And years went over till I that was little  
 had grown so tall,  
 The men would say of the maids, 'Our  
 Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'  
 I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught  
 myself all I could  
 To make a good wife for Harry, when  
 Harry came home for good.

## VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as  
 happy too,  
 For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll  
 never love any but you';

'I'll never love any but you' the morning  
 song of the lark,  
 'I'll never love any but you' the nightin-  
 gale's hymn in the dark.

## VII

And Harry came home at last, but he  
 look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
 Vext me a bit, till he told me that so  
 many years had gone by,  
 I had grown so handsome and tall—that  
 I might ha' forgot him somehow—  
 For he thought—there were other lads—  
 he was fear'd to look at me now.

## VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we were  
 married o' Christmas day,  
 Married among the red berries, an' all as  
 merry as May—  
 Those were the pleasant times, my house  
 an' my man were my pride,  
 We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-  
 sailing with wind an' tide.

## IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he  
 tried the villages round,  
 So Harry went over the Solent to see if  
 work could be found;  
 An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work,  
 little wife, so far as I know;  
 I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss  
 you before I go.'

## X

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't  
 he coming that day?  
 An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
 push'd in a corner away,  
 It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a  
 letter along wi' the rest,  
 I had better ha' put my naked hand in a  
 hornets' nest.

## XI

'Sweetheart'—this was the letter—this  
 was the letter I read—  
 'You promised to find me work near you,  
 an' I wish I was dead—

Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you  
haven't done it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away,  
an' I wish that I had.'

## XII

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant  
times that had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry—*my*  
quarrel—the first an' the last.

## XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the  
letter that drove me wild,  
An' he told it me all at once, as simple as  
any child,

'What can it matter, my lass, what I did  
wi' my single life?

I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to  
his wife;

An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.' 'Then,'  
I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'

An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love?  
Come, come, little wife, let it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no need  
to make such a stir.'

But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said  
'You were keeping with her,

When I was a-loving you all along an' the  
same as before.'

An' he didn't speak for a while an' he  
anger'd me more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle  
way, 'Let bygones be!'

'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said,  
'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she*—  
in her shame an' her sin—

You'll have her to nurse my child, if I  
die o' my lying in!

You'll make her its second mother! I  
hate her—an' I hate you!'

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha'  
beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,  
when I were so crazy wi' spite,

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
all come right.'

## XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I  
watch'd him, an' when he came in

I felt that my heart was hard, he was all  
wet thro' to the skin,  
An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never  
said 'on-wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when he  
came to bid me goodbye.

'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but  
that isn't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss  
me before I go?'

## XV

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her—  
if you will,' I said—

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must  
ha' been light i' my head—

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'  
—I didn't know well what I meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he  
turn'd *his* face an' he went.

## XVI

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten  
my work to do;

You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I  
never loved any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for  
what she wrote,

I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-  
night by the boat.'

## XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought  
of him out at sea,

An' I felt I had been to blame; he was  
always kind to me.

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
all come right'—

An' the boat went down that night—the  
boat went down that night.

## RIZPAH

## 17—

## I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind  
over land and sea—

And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother,  
come out to me.'

Why should he call me to-night, when he  
knows that I cannot go?  
For the downs are as bright as day, and  
the full moon stares at the snow.

## II

We should be seen, my dear; they would  
spy us out of the town.  
The loud black nights for us, and the  
storm rushing over the down,  
When I cannot see my own hand, but am  
led by the creak of the chain,  
And grovel and grope for my son till I  
find myself drenched with the rain.

## III

Anything fallen again? nay—what was  
there left to fall?  
I have taken them home, I have number'd  
the bones, I have hidden them all.  
What am I saying? and what are *you*?  
do you come as a spy?  
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the  
tree falls so must it lie.

## IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?  
you—what have you heard?  
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have  
spoken a word.  
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none  
of their spies—  
But the night has crept into my heart,  
and begun to darken my eyes.

## V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what  
should *you* know of the night,  
The blast and the burning shame and the  
bitter frost and the fright?  
I have done it, while you were asleep—  
you were only made for the day.  
I have gather'd my baby together—and  
now you may go your way.

## VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit  
by an old dying wife.  
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have  
only an hour of life.

I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he  
went out to die.  
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he  
never has told me a lie.  
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once  
when he was but a child—  
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said;  
he was always so wild—  
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my  
Willy—he never could rest.  
The King should have made him a soldier,  
he would have been one of his best.

## VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and  
they never would let him be good;  
They swore that he dare not rob the mail,  
and he swore that he would;  
And he took no life, but he took one  
purse, and when all was done  
He flung it among his fellows—I'll none  
of it, said my son.

## VIII

I came into court to the Judge and the  
lawyers. I told them my tale,  
God's own truth—but they kill'd him,  
they kill'd him for robbing the mail.  
They hang'd him in chains for a show—  
we had always borne a good name—  
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put  
away—isn't that enough shame?  
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide!  
but they set him so high  
That all the ships of the world could  
stare at him, passing by.  
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and  
horrible fowls of the air,  
But not the black heart of the lawyer who  
kill'd him and hang'd him there.

## IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had  
bid him my last goodbye;  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.  
'O mother!' I heard him cry.  
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had  
something further to say,  
And now I never shall know it. The  
jailer forced me away.



## X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry  
 of my boy that was dead,  
 They seized me and shut me up: they  
 fasten'd me down on my bed.  
 'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the  
 dark to me year after year—  
 They beat me for that, they beat me—  
 you know that I couldn't but hear;  
 And then at the last they found I had  
 grown so stupid and still  
 They let me abroad again—but the  
 creatures had worked their will.

## XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of  
 my bone was left—  
 I stole them all from the lawyers—and  
 you, will you call it a theft?—  
 My baby, the bones that had suck'd me,  
 the bones that had laughed and  
 had cried—  
 Theirs? O no! they are mine—not  
 theirs—they had moved in my side.

## XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones?  
 I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all—  
 I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night  
 by the churchyard wall.  
 My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the  
 trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,  
 But I charge you never to say that I laid  
 him in holy ground.

## XIII

They would scratch him up—they would  
 hang him again on the cursed tree.  
 Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—  
 let all that be,  
 And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's  
 good will toward men—  
 'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'  
 —let me hear it again;  
 'Full of compassion and mercy—long-  
 suffering.' Yes, O yes!  
 For the lawyer is born but to murder—  
 the Saviour lives but to bless.

*He'll* never put on the black cap except  
 for the worst of the worst,  
 And the first may be last—I have heard it  
 in church—and the last may be  
 first.  
 Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as the  
 Lord must know,  
 Year after year in the mist and the wind  
 and the shower and the snow.

## XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told  
 you he never repented his sin.  
 How do they know it? are *they* his  
 mother? are *you* of his kin?  
 Heard! have you ever heard, when the  
 storm on the downs began,  
 The wind that 'ill wail like a child and  
 the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

## XV

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's  
 all very well.  
 But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall  
 not find him in Hell.  
 For I cared so much for my boy that the  
 Lord has look'd into my care,  
 And He means me I'm sure to be happy  
 with Willy, I know not where.

## XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul,  
 that is all your desire:  
 Do you think that I care for *my* soul if  
 my boy be gone to the fire?  
 I have been with God in the dark—go,  
 go, you may leave me alone—  
 You never have borne a child—you are  
 just as hard as a stone.

## XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think  
 that you mean to be kind,  
 But I cannot hear what you say for my  
 Willy's voice in the wind—  
 The snow and the sky so bright—he used  
 but to call in the dark,  
 And he calls to me now from the church  
 and not from the gibbet—for hark!

Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking the walls—  
 Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-night. I am going. He calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER

### I

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun 'a sights<sup>1</sup> to tell.  
 Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an' well.  
 'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon<sup>2</sup> !'  
 Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors 'a seëan an' 'a doon ;  
 'Summat to drink—sa' 'ot ?' I 'a nowt but Adam's wine :  
 What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the 'eät o' the line ?

### II

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer ?'  
 I'll tell tha. Gin.  
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down to the inn.  
 Naay—fur I be maäin glad, but thaw tha was iver sa dry,  
 Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

### III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur it? back-end o' June,  
 Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a fiddle i' tune :  
 I could fettle and clump owd booöts and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,  
 As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *cratin'*, *datin'*, *what*, *ai* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as 'appy as 'art could think,  
 An' then the babby wur burn, and then I taäkes to the drink.

### IV

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be hafe shaämed on it now,  
 We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could sing a good song at the Plow ;  
 Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted my huck,<sup>1</sup>  
 An' I coom'd neck-an'-crop soomtimes slaäpe down i' the squad an' the muck ;  
 An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor—not hafe ov a man, my lad—  
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scatted my faäce like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad  
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,<sup>2</sup> an' raäted ma, 'Sottin' thy braäins  
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'<sup>3</sup> about i' the laänes,  
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not touch thy 'at to the Squire' ;  
 An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire ;  
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as a king,  
 Foäłks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brokken string.

### V

An' Sally she wesh'd foäłks' cloäths to keep the wolf fro' the door,  
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor,  
 Fur I 'fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,  
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

### VI

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose at a faäir,  
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' and teärin' 'er 'aäir,

<sup>1</sup> Hip.

<sup>2</sup> Scold.

<sup>3</sup> Lounging.

An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'  
 sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick  
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied  
 our Sally a kick,  
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an'  
 she an' the babby beäl'd,<sup>1</sup>  
 Fur I know'd naw moor what I did nor  
 a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

## VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd  
 that our Sally went laämed  
 'Cos o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur  
 dreädful ashaämed;  
 An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>2</sup> an' draggle taäil'd  
 in an owd turn gown,  
 An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd an'  
 the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

## VIII

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty  
 an' neät an' sweät,  
 Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro'  
 'eäd to feeät:  
 An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied  
 'er by Thursby thurn;  
 Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a  
 Sunday at murn,  
 Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin'  
 oop 'igher an' 'igher,  
 An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e  
 shined like a sparkle-ò' fire.  
 'Doesn't tha see 'im,' she axes, 'fur I  
 can see 'im?' an' I  
 Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
 danced in 'er pratty blue eye;  
 An' I says 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an'  
 Sally says 'Noä, thou moänt,'  
 But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,  
 an' Sally says 'doänt!'

## IX

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin'; at  
 fust she wur all in a tew,  
 But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togither  
 like birds on a beugh;

<sup>1</sup> Bellowed, cried out.

<sup>2</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.

An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an'  
 the loov o' God fur men,  
 An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied  
 me a kiss ov 'ersen.

## X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like  
 Saätan as fell  
 Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire—thaw  
 theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;  
 Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf  
 fro' the door,  
 All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er  
 as well as afoor.

## XI

Sa like a greät num-cumpus I blubber'd  
 awaäy o' the bed—  
 'Weänt niver do it naw moor'; an'  
 Sally looökt up an' she said,  
 'I'll upowd i' tha weänt; thou'rt like  
 the rest o' the men,  
 Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha  
 does it ageän.  
 Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knows,  
 as knows tha sa well,  
 That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha'll  
 foller 'im slick into Hell.'

## XII

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goä sniffin'  
 about the tap.'  
 'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I  
 thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'  
 'Noä': an' I started awaäy like a shot,  
 an' down to the Hinn,  
 An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer,  
 yon big black bottle o' gin.

## XIII

'That caps owt,'<sup>2</sup> says Sally, an' saw she  
 begins to cry,  
 But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to  
 'er, 'Sally,' says I,  
 'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord  
 an' the power ov 'is Graäce,  
 Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hennemy  
 straît i' the faäce,

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.

<sup>2</sup> That's beyond everything.

Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma  
looök at 'im then,  
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's  
the Divil's oän sen.'

## XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't do  
naw work an' all,  
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd  
my 'and wi' the hawl,  
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'  
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,  
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän  
I feel'd mysen free.

## XV

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk  
stood a-gawmin'<sup>1</sup> in,  
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd istead  
of a quart o' gin;  
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an'  
I wur chousin' the wife,  
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it  
nobbut to säave my life;  
An' blacksmith 'e strips mé the thick ov  
'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,  
'Feäl thou this! thou can't graw this  
upo' watter!' says he.  
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as  
candles was lit,  
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun  
breäk 'im off bit by bit.'  
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says Par-  
son, and laäys down 'is 'at,  
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I  
respecks tha fur that';  
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down  
fro' the 'All to see,  
An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I  
respecks tha,' says 'e;  
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind  
fro' far an' wide,  
And browt me the boöts to be cobbled  
fro' hafe the coontryside.

## XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan  
to my dying daäy;

<sup>1</sup> Staring vacantly.

I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother  
kind of a waäy,  
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps  
'im cleän an' bright,  
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im,  
an' puts 'im back i' the light.

## XVII

Wouldn't a pint 'a sarved as well as a  
quart? Naw doubt:  
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an'  
fowt it out.  
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I  
cared to taäste,  
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur  
I'd feäl mysen cleän disgräaced.

## XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass,  
when I cooms to die,  
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Divil's  
in 'im,' said I.  
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if  
Sally be left aloän,  
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke  
'im afoor the Throän.

## XIX

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy ä-steppin'  
along the streeät,  
Doesn't tha knaw 'er—sa pratty, an' feät,  
an' neät, an' sweeät?  
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe  
ammost spick-span-new,  
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin  
wesh'd i' the dew.

## XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be  
a-goin to dine,  
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings pud-  
din'<sup>1</sup> an' Adam's wine;  
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä  
fur it down to the Hinn,  
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,  
noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of the cow  
after calving.

## THE REVENGE

## A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

## I

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard  
 Grenville lay,  
 And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came  
 flying from far away :  
 'Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have  
 sighted fifty-three !'  
 Then sware Lord Thomas Howard :  
 'Fore God I am no coward ;  
 But I cannot meet them here, for my  
 ships are out of gear,  
 And the half my men are sick. I must  
 fly, but follow quick.  
 We are six ships of the line ; can we  
 fight with fifty-three ?'

## II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville : 'I  
 know you are no coward ;  
 You fly them for a moment to fight with  
 them again.  
 But I've ninety men and more that are  
 lying sick ashore.  
 I should count myself the coward if I left  
 them, my Lord Howard,  
 To these Inquisition dogs and the devil-  
 doms of Spain.'

## III

So Lord Howard past away with five  
 ships of war that day,  
 Till he melted like a cloud in the silent  
 summer heaven ;  
 But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick  
 men from the land  
 Very carefully and slow,  
 Men of Bideford in Devon,  
 And we laid them on the ballast down  
 below ;  
 For we brought them all aboard,  
 And they blest him in their pain, that they  
 were not left to Spain,  
 To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the  
 glory of the Lord.

## IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work  
 the ship and to fight,  
 And he sailed away from Flores till the  
 Spaniard came in sight,  
 With his huge sea-castles heaving upon  
 the weather bow.  
 'Shall we fight or shall we fly ?  
 Good Sir Richard, tell us now,  
 For to fight is but to die !  
 There'll be little of us left by the time  
 this sun be set.'  
 And Sir Richard said again : 'We be all  
 good English men.  
 Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the  
 children of the devil,  
 For I never turn'd my back upon Don or  
 devil yet.'

## V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and  
 we roar'd a hurrah, and so  
 The little Revenge ran on sheer into the  
 heart of the foe,  
 With her hundred fighters on deck, and  
 her ninety sick below ;  
 For half of their fleet to the right and  
 half to the left were seen,  
 And the little Revenge ran on thro' the  
 long sea-lane between.

## VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down  
 from their decks and laugh'd,  
 Thousands of their seamen made mock at  
 the mad little craft  
 Running on and on, till delay'd  
 By their mountain-like San Philip that,  
 of fifteen hundred tons,  
 And up-shadowing high above us with  
 her yawning tiers of guns,  
 Took the breath from our sails, and we  
 stay'd.

## VII

And while now the great San Philip hung  
 above us like a cloud  
 Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
 Long and loud,

Four galleons drew away  
 From the Spanish fleet that day,  
 And two upon the larboard and two upon  
 the starboard lay,  
 And the battle-thunder broke from them  
 all.

## VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she be-  
 thought herself and went  
 Having that within her womb that had  
 left her ill content ;  
 And the rest they came aboard us, and  
 they fought us hand to hand,  
 For a dozen times they came with their  
 pikes and musqueteers,  
 And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a  
 dog that shakes his ears  
 When he leaps from the water to the land.

## IX

And the sun went down, and the stars  
 came out far over the summer sea,  
 But never a moment ceased the fight of  
 the one and the fifty-three.  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
 their high-built galleons came,  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
 with her battle-thunder and flame ;  
 Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew  
 back with her dead and her shame.  
 For some were sunk and many were shat-  
 ter'd, and so could fight us no  
 more—  
 God of battles, was ever a battle like this  
 in the world before ?

## X

For he said ' Fight on ! fight on ! '  
 Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;  
 And it chanced that, when half of the  
 short summer night was gone,  
 With a grisly wound to be drest he had  
 left the deck,  
 But a bullet struck him that was dressing  
 it suddenly dead,  
 And himself he was wounded again in the  
 side and the head,  
 And he said ' Fight on ! fight on ! '

## XI

And the night went down, and the sun  
 smiled out far over the summer sea,  
 And the Spanish fleet with broken sides  
 lay round us all in a ring ;  
 But they dared not touch us again, for  
 they fear'd that we still could sting,  
 So they watch'd what the end would be.  
 And we had not fought them in vain,  
 But in perilous plight were we,  
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
 slain,  
 And half of the rest of us maim'd for life  
 In the crash of the cannonades and the  
 desperate strife ;  
 And the sick men down in the hold were  
 most of them stark and cold,  
 And the pikes were all broken or bent,  
 and the powder was all of it spent ;  
 And the masts and the rigging were lying  
 over the side ;  
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,  
 ' We have fought such a fight for a day  
 and a night  
 As may never be fought again !  
 We have won great glory, my men !  
 And a day less or more  
 At sea or ashore,  
 We die—does it matter when ?  
 Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink  
 her, split her in twain !  
 Fall into the hands of God, not into the  
 hands of Spain ! '

## XII

And the gunner said ' Ay, ay,' but the  
 seamen made reply :  
 ' We have children, we have wives,  
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.  
 We will make the Spaniard promise, if  
 we yield, to let us go ;  
 We shall live to fight again and to strike  
 another blow.'  
 And the lion there lay dying, and they  
 yielded to the foe.

## XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their  
 flagship bore him then,



Where they laid him by the mast, old  
 Sir Richard caught at last,  
 And they praised him to his face with  
 their courtly foreign grace ;  
 But he rose upon their decks, and he cried :  
 ' I have fought for Queen and Faith like  
 a valiant man and true ;  
 I have only done my duty as a man is  
 bound to do :  
 With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Gren-  
 ville die !'  
 And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

## XIV

And they stared at the dead that had  
 been so valiant and true,  
 And had holden the power and glory of  
 Spain so cheap  
 That he dared her with one little ship  
 and his English few ;  
 Was he devil or man? He was devil  
 for aught they knew,  
 But they sank his body with honour down  
 into the deep,  
 And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
 swarthier alien crew,  
 And away she sail'd with her loss and  
 long'd for her own ;  
 When a wind from the lands they had  
 ruin'd awoke from sleep,  
 And the water began to heave and the  
 weather to moan,  
 And or ever that evening ended a great  
 gale blew,  
 And a wave like the wave that is raised  
 by an earthquake grew,  
 Till it smote on their hulls and their sails  
 and their masts and their flags,  
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on  
 the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,  
 And the little Revenge herself went down  
 by the island crags  
 To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar ; and by  
 their clash,  
 And prelude on the keys, I know the  
 song,

Their favourite—which I call ' The Tables  
 Turned.'  
 Evelyn begins it ' O diviner Air.'

## EVELYN

O diviner Air,  
 Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the  
 glare,  
 Far from out the west in shadowing  
 showers,  
 Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
 Making fresh and fair  
 All the bowers and the flowers,  
 Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
 Over all this weary world of ours,  
 Breathe, diviner Air !

A sweet voice that—you scarce could  
 better that.  
 Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

## EDITH

O diviner light,  
 Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with  
 night,  
 Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
 showers,  
 Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
 Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,  
 Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,  
 Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
 Break, diviner light !

Marvellously like, their voices—and them-  
 selves !  
 Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the  
 other,  
 As one is somewhat graver than the other—  
 Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle,  
 whom  
 You count the father of your fortune,  
 longs  
 For this alliance : let me ask you then,  
 Which voice most takes you? for I do  
 not doubt  
 Being a watchful parent, you are taken  
 With one or other : tho' sometimes I  
 fear  
 You may be flickering, fluttering in a  
 doubt

Between the two—which must not be—  
which might

Be death to one : they both are beautiful :  
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
The common voice, if one may trust it :  
she ?

No ! but the paler and the graver, Edith.  
Woo her and gain her then : no wavering,  
boy !

The graver is perhaps the one for you  
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.  
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.  
Not so : their mother and her sister loved  
More passionately still.

But that my best  
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,  
And that I know you worthy everyway  
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath  
To part them, or part from them : and  
yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands in  
your view

From this bay window—which our house  
has held

Three hundred years—will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,  
A hand upon the head of either child,  
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his  
own

Were silver, 'get them wedded' would  
he say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd him  
'why ?'

Ay, why ? said he, 'for why should I go  
lame ?'

Then told them of his wars, and of his  
wound.

For see—this wine—the grape from  
whence it flow'd

Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,  
When that brave soldier, down the terrible  
ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He left  
me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its youth,  
As I of mine, and my first passion.  
Come !

Here's to your happy union with my child !

Yet must you change your name : no  
fault of mine !

You say that you can do it as willingly  
As birds make ready for their bridal-  
time

By change of feather : for all that, my  
boy,

Some birds are sick and sullen when they  
moult.

An old and worthy name ! but mine that  
stirr'd

Among our civil wars and earlier too  
Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
I care not for a name—no fault of mine.  
Once more—a happier marriage than my  
own !

You see yon Lombard poplar on the  
plain.

The highway running by it leaves a breadth  
Of sward to left and right, where, long  
ago,

One bright May morning in a world of  
song,

I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
The aerial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed ; I woke. An open landaulet  
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me,  
show'd

Turning my way, the loveliest face on  
earth.

The face of one there sitting opposite,  
On whom I brought a strange unhappi-  
ness,

That time I did not see.

Love at first sight  
May seem—with goodly rhyme and  
reason for it—

Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face  
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet once,  
when first

I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
A moonless night with storm—one light-  
ning-fork

Flash'd out the lake ; and tho' I loiter'd  
there

The full day after, yet in retrospect  
That less than momentary thunder-sketch  
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face  
for me.

Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.  
For look you here—the shadows are too  
deep,

And like the critic's blurring comment  
make

The veriest beauties of the work appear  
The darkest faults : the sweet eyes frown :  
the lips

Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'  
sense and soul

And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found  
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall  
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
beechen boughs

Of our New Forest. I was there alone :  
The phantom of the whirling landaulet  
For ever past me by : when one quick  
peal

Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmer-  
ing glades

Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth  
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,  
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all  
One bloom of youth, health, beauty,  
happiness,

And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing  
me

Call'd me to join them ; so with these I  
spent

What seem'd my crowning hour, my day  
of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,  
The worse for her, for me ! was I content ?  
Ay—no, not quite ; for now and then I  
thought

Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright  
May,

Had made a heated haze to magnify  
The charm of Edith—that a man's ideal  
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with  
Plato's God,

Not findable here—content, and not con-  
tent,

In some such fashion as a man may be  
That having had the portrait of his friend  
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,  
' Good ! very like ! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by  
words,

Only, believing I loved Edith, made  
Edith love *me*. Then came the day  
when I,

Flattering myself that all my doubts were  
fools

Born of the fool this Age that doubts of  
all—

Not I that day of Edith's love or mine—  
Had braced my purpose to declare my-  
self :

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
The golden gates would open at a word.  
I spoke it—told her of my passion, seen  
And lost and found again, had got so far,  
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell—I  
heard

Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the  
doors—

On a sudden after two Italian years  
Had set the blossom of her health again,  
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—  
there,

There was the face, and altogether she.  
The mother fell about the daughter's  
neck,

The sisters closed in one another's arms,  
Their people throng'd about them from  
the hall,

And in the thick of question and reply  
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,  
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her ;  
I could not free myself in honour—bound  
Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
But counterpressures of the yielded hand  
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,

Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes  
 Upon me when she thought I did not see—  
 Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her  
 Loving the other? do her that great wrong?  
 Had I not dream'd I loved her yestern-morn?  
 Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,  
 Grew after marriage to full height and form?  
 Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there—  
 Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of it—  
 Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—  
 What end but darkness could ensue from this  
 For all the three? So Love and Honour jarr'd  
 Tho' Love and Honour join'd to raise the full  
 High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down  
 Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote :

'My mother bids me ask' (I did not tell you—  
 A widow with less guile than many a child.  
 God help the wrinkled children that are Christ's  
 As well as the plump cheek—she wrought us harm,  
 Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill?' (so ran  
 The letter) 'you have not been here of late.  
 You will not find me here. At last I go  
 On that long-promised visit to the North.  
 I told you wayside story to my mother  
 And Evelyn. She remembers you.  
 Farewell.  
 Pray come and see my mother. Almost blind  
 With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks  
 She sees you when she hears. Again  
 farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to warm so far  
 That I could stamp my image on her heart!  
 'Pray come and see my mother, and farewell.'  
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven  
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish, strange!  
 What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity  
 Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vex't myself  
 And all in vain for her—cold heart or none—  
 No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear  
 To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.

For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,  
 Because the simple mother work'd upon.  
 By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.  
 And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.

But on that day, not being all at ease,  
 I from the altar glancing back upon her,  
 Before the first 'I will' was utter'd, saw  
 The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passionless—

'No harm, no harm' I turn'd again, and placed  
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no word,  
 She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn clung  
 In utter silence for so long, I thought  
 'What, will she never set her sister free?'

We left her, happy each in each, and then,  
 As tho' the happiness of each in each  
 Were not enough, must fain have torrents, lakes,  
 Hills, the great things of Nature and the fair,  
 To lift us as it were from commonplace,  
 And help us to our joy. Better have sent

Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,  
To change with her horizon, if true Love  
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would  
not live  
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming  
world  
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
Behind the world, that make our griefs  
our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-  
day  
The great Tragedian, that had quench'd  
herself  
In that assumption of the bridesmaid—  
she  
That loved me—our true Edith—her  
brain broke  
With over-acting, till she rose and fled  
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain  
To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray  
Before *that* altar—so I think ; and there  
They found her beating the hard Protest-  
ant doors.  
She died and she was buried ere we  
knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At  
once  
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that  
had sunn'd  
The morning of our marriage, past away :  
And on our home-return the daily want  
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still  
Haunted us like her ghost ; and by and  
by,  
Either from that necessity for talk  
Which lives with blindness, or plain  
innocence  
Of nature, or desire that her lost child  
Should earn from both the praise of  
heroism,  
The mother broke her promise to the  
dead,  
And told the living daughter with what  
love  
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of  
her,  
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

T

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt  
the twins—  
Did I not tell you they were twins?—  
prevail'd

So far that no caress could win my wife  
Back to that passionate answer of full  
heart

I had from her at first. Not that her love,  
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of  
love,

Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous  
wail

For ever woke the unhappy Past again,  
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be  
my bride,

Put forth cold hands between us, and I  
fear'd

The very fountains of her life were  
chill'd ;

So took her thence, and brought her  
here, and here

She bore a child, whom reverently we  
call'd

Edith ; and in the second year was born  
A second—this I named from her own  
self,

Evelyn ; then two weeks—no more—she  
joined,

In and beyond the grave, that one she  
loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the  
day,

The sisters glide about me hand in hand,  
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell

One from the other, no, nor care to tell  
One from the other, only know they  
come,

They smile upon me, till, remembering  
all

The love they both have borne me, and  
the love

I bore them both—divided as I am  
From either by the stillness of the grave—  
I know not which of these I love the  
best.

But *you* love Edith ; and her own true  
eyes

Are traitors to her ; our quick Evelyn—

2 L

The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they  
talk,  
And not without good reason, my good  
son—  
Is yet untouch'd : and I that hold them  
both  
Dearest of all things—well, I am not  
sure—  
But if there lie a preference eitherway,  
And in the rich vocabulary of Love  
'Most dearest' be a true superlative—  
I think I likewise love your Edith most.

## THE VILLAGE WIFE ; OR, THE ENTAIL<sup>1</sup>

### I

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur New  
Squire coom'd last night.  
Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goä wi'  
tha back : all right ;  
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-  
rants the heggs be as well,  
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya  
breaks the shell.

### II

Sit thysen down fur a bit : hev a glass o'  
cowslip wine !  
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as  
thaw they was gells o' mine,  
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire  
an' 'is darters an' me,  
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver  
not took to she :  
But Nelly, the last of the clutch,<sup>2</sup> I liked  
'er the fust on 'em all,  
Fur hoffsens we talkt o' my darter-es died  
o' the fever at fall :  
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but  
Miss Annie she said it wur draäins,  
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'  
arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäins.  
Eh ! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer,  
I han't gotten none !  
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is  
'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

<sup>1</sup> See note to 'Northern Cobbler.'

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

### III

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass : tha dosn'  
knew what that be ?  
But I knows the law, I does, for the  
lawyer ha tow'd it me.  
'When theer's naw 'eä'd to a 'Ouse by  
the fault o' that ere maäle—  
The gells they counts fur nowt, and the  
next un he taäkes the taäil.'

### IV

What be the next un like ? can tha tell  
ony harm on 'im lass ?—  
Naay sit down—naw 'urry—sa cowl !—  
hev another glass !  
Straänge an' cowl fur the time ! we may  
happen a fall o' snaw—  
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but  
I likes to know.  
An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt boooklarn'd : but  
'e dosn' not coom fro' the shere ;  
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we  
haätes boooklarnin' ere.

### V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'  
niver lookt arter the land—  
Whoäts or tonups or taätes—'e 'ed hallus  
a boook i' 'is 'and,  
Hallus aloän wi' 'is boooks, thaw nigh  
upo' seventy year.  
An' boooks, what's boooks ? thou knows  
thebbe naither 'ere nor theer.

### VI

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils, an'  
the lawyer he tow'd it me  
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he  
couldn't cut down a tree !  
'Drat the trees,' says I, to, be sewer I  
haätes 'em, my lass,  
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'  
they sucks the muck fro' the grass.

### VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied  
to the tramps goin' by—  
An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi'  
hoffsens a drop in 'is eye.



An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn  
ridin-erse to 'ersen,  
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms,  
an' was 'untin' arter the men,  
An' hallus a-dallackt<sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out,  
an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,  
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-gowk<sup>2</sup>  
wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noäse,  
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff es it  
couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,  
Fur atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e snift  
up a box in a daäy,  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor  
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,  
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e  
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but  
Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,  
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e  
didn't take kind to it like ;  
But I eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry<sup>3</sup> owd  
book thutty pound an' moor,  
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen,  
sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;  
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow  
much—fur an owd scratted stoän,  
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an'  
'e got a brown pot an' a boän,  
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä,  
wi' good gowd o' the Queen,  
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an'  
which was a shaame to be seen ;  
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e  
niver not seed to owt,  
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an'  
booöks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

## VIII

But owd Squire's läädy es long es she  
lived she kep 'em all clear,  
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed  
none of 'er darters 'ere ;  
But arter she died we was all es one, the  
childer an' me,  
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens  
we hed 'em to tea.  
Lawk ! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud  
talk o' their Missis's waäys,

<sup>1</sup> Overdrest in gay colours.<sup>2</sup> Owl.<sup>3</sup> Filthy.

An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses.—I'll  
tell tha some o' these daäys.  
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop,  
like 'er mother afoor—  
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver  
darken'd my door.

## IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd  
gotten a fright at last,  
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
letters they foller'd sa fast ;  
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e  
says to 'im, meek as a mouse,  
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the  
gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,  
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps  
es thou'll 'elp me a bit,  
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I  
may saäve mysen yit.'

## X

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e  
sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noa.  
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an'  
be dang'd if I iver let goä !  
Coom ! coom ! feyther, 'e says, 'why  
shouldn't thy booöks be sowd ?  
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe  
worth their weight i' gowd.'

## XI

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd  
'em, belong'd to the Squire,  
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i' the  
middle to kindle the fire ;  
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd  
nigh to nowt at the saäle,  
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git  
'im to cut off 'is taäil.

## XII

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e wëre  
that outdacious at 'oäm,  
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell  
wi' a small-tooth coämb—  
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk  
wi' the farmer's aäle,  
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e wouldn't  
cut off the taäil.

## XIII

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck ; and a  
 thurn be a-grawin' theer,  
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maäy  
 es I see'd it to-year—  
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it gied  
 me a scare tother night,  
 Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'  
 the derk, fur it looökt sa white.  
 ' Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp !'—thaw  
 the banks o' the beck be sa high,  
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw  
 niver a hair wur awry ;  
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e  
 lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

## XIV

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur  
 gone an' 'is boy wur deäð,  
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e  
 niver not lift oop 'is 'eäð :  
 Hallus a soft un Squire !, an' 'e smiled,  
 fur 'e hedn't naw friend,  
 Sa feyther an' son was buried togher,  
 an' this wur the hend.

## XV

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the  
 mooney, but hes the pride,  
 'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the  
 tother side ;  
 But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, how-  
 siver they praäy'd an' praäy'd,  
 Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es læves their  
 debts to be paäid.  
 Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor  
 owd Squire i' the wood,  
 An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they  
 weänt niver coom to naw good.

## XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy  
 wi' a hofficer lað,  
 An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o' coorse  
 she be gone to the bad !  
 An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-  
 'arts she niver 'ed none—

Straänge an' unheppen <sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy ! we  
 naämed her 'Dot an' gaw one !'  
 An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out  
 ony harm i' the legs,  
 An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäð as  
 bald as one o' them heggs,  
 An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big  
 i' the mouth as a cow,  
 An' saw she mun hammergrate, <sup>2</sup> lass, or  
 she weänt git a maäte onyhow !  
 An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor  
 my awn foälks to my faäce  
 ' A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev to  
 be larn'd her awn plaäce,'  
 Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now  
 be a-grawin' sa howd,  
 I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt  
 not fit to be towd !

## XVII

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd  
 Miss Annie to saäy  
 Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es soon  
 es they went awaäy,  
 Fur, lawks ! 'ow I cried when they went,  
 an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,  
 Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is  
 gells es belong'd to the land ;  
 Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther  
 'ere nor theer !  
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur  
 huppuds o' twenty year.

## XVIII

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I  
 hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
 An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they  
 knaw'd what a hegg wur an' all ;  
 Hugger - mugger they lived, but they  
 wasn't that eäsy to please,  
 Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they  
 laäid big heggs es tha seas ;  
 An' I niver puts saäme <sup>3</sup> i' my butter,  
 they does it at Willis's farm,  
 Taäste another drop o' the wine—tweänt  
 do tha naw harm.

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.<sup>2</sup> Emigrate.<sup>3</sup> Lard.

## XIX

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taail in 'is  
'and, an' owd Squire's gone ;  
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my  
nightcap wur on ;  
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he  
coom'd last night sa laäte—  
Pluksh ! ! !<sup>1</sup> the hens i' the peäs ! why  
didn't tha hesp the gaäte ?

IN THE CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL

## EMMIE

## I

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never  
had seen him before,  
But he sent a chill to my heart when I  
saw him come in at the door,  
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France  
and of other lands—  
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big  
merciless hands !  
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but  
they said too of him  
He was happier using the knife than in  
trying to save the limb,  
And that I can well believe, for he look'd  
so coarse and so red,  
I could think he was one of those who  
would break their jests on the dead,  
And mangle the living dog that had loved  
him and fawn'd at his knee—  
Drench'd with the hellish oorali—that  
ever such things should be !

## II

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of  
our children would die  
But for the voice of Love, and the smile,  
and the comforting eye—  
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone  
seem'd out of its place—  
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all  
but a hopeless case :

And he handled him gently enough ; but  
his voice and his face were not kind,  
And it was but a hopeless case, he had  
seen it and made up his mind,  
And he said to me roughly 'The lad will  
need little more of your care.'  
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek  
the Lord Jesus in prayer ;  
They are all his children here, and I pray  
for them all as my own' :  
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman,  
can prayer set a broken bone ?'  
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I  
know that I heard him say  
'All very well—but the good Lord Jesus  
has had his day.'

## III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd.  
It will come by and by.  
O how could I serve in the wards if the  
hope of the world were a lie ?  
How could I bear with the sights and the  
loathsome smells of disease  
But that He said 'Ye do it to me, when  
ye do it to these' ?

## IV

So he went. And we past to this ward  
where the younger children are laid:  
Here is the cot of our orphan, our dar-  
ling, our meek little maid ;  
Empty you see just now ! We have lost  
her who loved her so much—  
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive  
plant to the touch ;  
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
moved me to tears,  
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have  
found in a child of her years—  
Nay you remember our Emmie ; you used  
to send her the flowers ;  
How she would smile at 'em, play with  
'em, talk to 'em hours after hours !  
They that can wander at will where the  
works of the Lord are reveal'd  
Little guess what joy can be got from a  
cowslip out of the field ;  
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all  
they can know of the spring,

<sup>1</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to

scare trespassing fowl.

They freshen and sweeten the wards like  
 the waft of an Angel's wing ;  
 And she lay with a flower in one hand and  
 her thin handscrost on her breast—  
 Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire,  
 and we thought her at rest,  
 Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor  
 said ' Poor little dear,  
 Nurse, I must do it to-morrow ; she'll  
 never live thro' it, I fear.'

## V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as  
 far as the head of the stair,  
 Then I return'd to the ward ; the child  
 didn't see I was there.

## VI

Never since I was nurse, had I been so  
 grieved and so vext !  
 Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd  
 from her cot to the next,  
 ' He says I shall never live thro' it, O  
 Annie, what shall I do ?'  
 Annie consider'd. ' If I,' said the wise  
 little Annie, ' was you,  
 I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to  
 help me, for, Emmie, you see,  
 It's all in the picture there : " Little  
 children should come to me."'  
 (Meaning the print that you gave us, I  
 find that it always can please  
 Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with  
 children about his knees.)  
 ' Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, ' but then  
 if I call to the Lord,  
 How should he know that it's me ? such  
 a lot of beds in the ward !'  
 That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she  
 consider'd and said :  
 ' Emmie, you put out your arms, and you  
 leave 'em outside on the bed—  
 The Lord has so *much* to see to ! but,  
 Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
 It's the little girl with her arms lying out  
 on the counterpane.'

## VII

I had sat three nights by the child—I  
 could not watch her for four—

My brain had begun to reel—I felt I  
 could do it no more.  
 That was my sleeping-night, but I thought  
 that it never would pass.  
 There was a thunderclap once, and a  
 clatter of hail on the glass,  
 And there was a phantom cry that I heard  
 as I tost about,  
 The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
 storm and the darkness without ;  
 My sleep was broken besides with dreams  
 of the dreadful knife  
 And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
 scarce would escape with her life ;  
 Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd  
 she stood by me and smiled,  
 And the doctor came at his hour, and we  
 went to see to the child.

## VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools : we  
 believed her asleep again—  
 Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out  
 on the counterpane ;  
 Say that His day is done ! Ah why should  
 we care what they say ?  
 The Lord of the children had heard her,  
 and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE  
PRINCESS ALICE

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that,  
 which lived  
 True life, live on—and if the fatal kiss,  
 Born of true life and love, divorce thee  
 not  
 From earthly love and life—if what we call  
 The spirit flash not all at once from out  
 This shadow into Substance—then perhaps  
 The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
 praise  
 From thine own State, and all our  
 breadth of realm,  
 Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds  
 in light,  
 Ascends to thee ; and this March morn  
 that sees  
 Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom

Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy  
grave,  
And thine Imperial mother smile again,  
May send one ray to thee ! and who can  
tell—  
Thou—England's England-loving daugh-  
ter—thou  
Dying so English thou wouldst have her  
flag  
Borne on thy coffin—where is he can  
swear  
But that some broken gleam from our  
poor earth  
May touch thee, while remembering thee,  
I lay  
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds  
Of England, and her banner in the East ?

## THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

### I

BANNER of England, not for a season, O  
banner of Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to  
the battle-cry !  
Never with mightier glory than when we  
had rear'd thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly  
siege of Lucknow—  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but  
ever we raised thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

### II

Frail were the works that defended the  
hold that we held with our lives—  
Women and children among us, God help  
them, our children and wives !  
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days  
or for twenty at most.  
'Never surrender, I charge you, but  
every man die at his post !'  
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our  
Lawrence the best of the brave :  
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd  
him—we laid him that night in  
his grave.

'Every man die at his post !' and there  
hail'd on our houses and halls  
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death  
from their cannon-balls,  
Death in our innermost chamber, and  
death at our slight barricade,  
Death while we stood with the musket, and  
death while we stooped to the spade,  
Death to the dying, and wounds to the  
wounded, for often there fell,  
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro'  
it, their shot and their shell,  
Death—for their spies were among us, their  
marksmen were told of our best,  
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the  
brain that could think for the rest ;  
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and  
bullets would rain at our feet—  
Fire from ten thousand at once of the  
rebels that girdled us round—  
Death at the glimpse of a finger from  
over the breadth of a street,  
Death from the heights of the mosque and  
the palace, and death in the ground !  
Mine? yes, a mine ! Countermine ! down,  
down ! and creep thro' the hole !  
Keep the revolver in hand ! you can hear  
him—the murderous mole !  
Quiet, ah ! quiet—wait till the point of  
the pickaxe be thro' !  
Click with the pick, coming nearer and  
nearer again than before—  
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the  
dark pioneer is no more ;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew !

### III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many  
times, and it chanced on a day  
Soon as the blast of that underground  
thunderclap echo'd away,  
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like  
so many fiends in their hell—  
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on  
volley, and yell upon yell—  
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad  
enemy fell.  
What have they done ? where is it ? Out  
yonder. Guard the Redan !

Storm at the Water-gate ! storm at the  
 Bailey-gate ! storm, and it ran  
 Surging and swaying all round us, as  
 ocean on every side  
 Plunges and heaves at a bank that is  
 daily devour'd by the tide—  
 So many thousands that if they be bold  
 enough, who shall escape ?  
 Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall  
 know we are soldiers and men !  
 Ready ! take aim at their leaders—their  
 masses are gapp'd with our grape—  
 Backward they reel like the wave, like  
 the wave flinging forward again,  
 Flying and foil'd at the last by the hand-  
 ful they could not subdue ;  
 And ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew.

## IV

Handful of men as we were, we were  
 English in heart and in limb,  
 Strong with the strength of the race to  
 command, to obey, to endure,  
 Each of us fought as if hope for the garri-  
 son hung but on him ;  
 Still—could we watch at all points ? we  
 were every day fewer and fewer.  
 There was a whisper among us, but only  
 a whisper that past :  
 ' Children and wives—if the tigers leap  
 into the fold unawares—  
 Every man die at his post—and the foe  
 may outlive us at last—  
 Better to fall by the hands that they love,  
 than to fall into theirs !'  
 Roar upon roar in a moment two mines  
 by the enemy sprung  
 Clove into perilous chasms our walls and  
 our poor palisades.  
 Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure  
 that your hand be as true !  
 Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed  
 are your flank fusillades—  
 Twice do we hurl them to earth from the  
 ladders to which they had clung,  
 Twice from the ditch where they shelter  
 we drive them with hand-grenades ;  
 And ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew.

## V

Then on another wild morning another  
 wild earthquake out-tore  
 Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
 twelve good paces or more.  
 Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there  
 from the light of the sun—  
 One has leapt up on the breach, crying  
 out : ' Follow me, follow me !'—  
 Mark him—he falls ! then another, and  
 him too, and down goes he.  
 Had they been bold enough then, who  
 can tell but the traitors had won ?  
 Boardings and rafters and doors—an em-  
 brasure ! make way for the gun !  
 Now double-charge it with grape ! It is  
 charged and we fire, and they  
 run.  
 Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the  
 dark face have his due !  
 Thanks to the kindly dark faces who  
 fought with us, faithful and few,  
 Fought with the bravest among us, and  
 drove them, and smote them, and  
 slew,  
 That ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner in India blew.

## VI

Men will forget what we suffer and not  
 what we do. We can fight !  
 But to be soldier all day and be sentinel  
 all thro' the night—  
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,  
 their lying alarms,  
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and  
 shoutings and soundings to arms,  
 Ever the labour of fifty that had to be  
 done by five,  
 Ever the marvel among us that one should  
 be left alive,  
 Ever the day with its traitorous death  
 from the loopholes around,  
 Ever the night with its coffinless corpse  
 to be laid in the ground,  
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge  
 of cataract skies,  
 Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite  
 torment of flies,



Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing  
 over an English field,  
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound  
 that *would* not be heal'd,  
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-  
 pitiless knife,—  
 Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never  
 could save us a life.  
 Valour of delicate women who tended the  
 hospital bed,  
 Horror of women in travail among the  
 dying and dead,  
 Grief for our perishing children, and  
 never a moment for grief,  
 Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering  
 hopes of relief,  
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd  
 for all that we knew—  
 Then day and night, day and night, coming  
 down on the still-shatter'd walls  
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands  
 of cannon-balls—  
 But ever upon the topmost roof our  
 banner of England blew.

## VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what  
 was told by the scout,  
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way  
 through the fell mutineers?  
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing  
 again in our ears!  
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubi-  
 lant shout,  
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer  
 with conquering cheers,  
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women  
 and children come out,  
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of  
 Havelock's good fusileers,  
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the  
 Highlander wet with their tears!  
 Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are  
 saved!—is it you? is it you?  
 Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved  
 by the blessing of Heaven!  
 'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held  
 it for eighty-seven!  
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old  
 banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE,  
LORD COBHAM

(IN WALES)

My friend should meet me somewhere  
 hereabout  
 To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one,  
 I trow—

I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;  
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or  
 none,

For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
 But God is with me in this wilderness,  
 These wet black passes and foam-churn-  
 ing chasms—

And God's free air, and hope of better  
 things.

I would I knew their speech; not now  
 to glean,  
 Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd  
 ears,

Some ears for Christ in this wild field of  
 Wales—

But, bread, merely for bread. This  
 tongue that wagg'd

They said with such heretical arrogance  
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel—  
 So much God's cause was fluent in it—is  
 here

But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;  
 'Bara!'—what use? The Shepherd,  
 when I speak,

Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard  
 'Dim Saesneg' passes, wroth at things  
 of old—

No fault of mine. Had he God's word  
 in Welsh

He might be kindlier: happily come the  
 day!

Not least art thou, thou little Beth-  
 lehem

In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;  
 Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
 Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living  
word,  
Who whilome spakest to the South in  
Greek  
About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
As good need was—thou hast come to  
talk our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
Must learn to use the tongues of all the  
world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that thou  
bringest

Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,  
My frighted Wiclif-preacher whom I  
crost

In flying hither? that one night a crowd  
Throng'd the waste field about the city  
gates:

The king was on them suddenly with a  
host.

Why there? they came to hear their  
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good  
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king—nor  
voice

Nor finger raised against him—took and  
hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—  
thirty-nine—

Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends,  
as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for your  
Priest

Labels—to take the king along with  
him—

All heresy, treason: but to call men  
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,  
Red in thy birth, redder with household  
war,

Now reddest with the blood of holy men,  
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—

If somewhere in the North, as Rumour  
sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lust-  
ing line—

By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,<sup>1</sup>  
That were my rose, there my allegiance  
due.

Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd,  
doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved: my friend was  
he,

Once my fast friend: I would have given  
my life

To help his own from scathe, a thousand  
lives

To save his soul. He might have come  
to learn

Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly  
Priests

Who fear the king's hard common-sense  
should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-  
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O had he  
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke for  
him,

But he would not; far liever led my  
friend

Back to the pure and universal church,  
But he would not: whether that heirless  
flaw

In his throne's title make him feel so  
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,  
So quick, so capable in soldiership,

In matters of the faith, alas the while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of  
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my  
dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!

Lord give thou power to thy two wit-  
nesses!

Lest the false faith make merry over  
them!

Two—nay but thirty-nine have risen and  
stand,

Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,  
Before thy light, and cry continually—

Cry—against whom?

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

Him, who should bear the sword  
Of Justice—what ! the kingly, kindly boy ;  
Who took the world so easily heretofore,  
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him  
Who gibed and japed—in many a merry  
tale

That shook our sides—at Pardoners,  
Summoners,

Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries  
And nunneries, when the wild hour and  
the wine

Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,  
Or Amurath of the East ?

Better to sink  
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling  
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits  
Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and  
mine,

Thy comrade—than to persecute the  
Lord,

And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt ! and while this mitred  
Arundel

Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the  
flame,

The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his  
clerks

Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,  
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten  
Into adulterous living, or such crimes  
As holy Paul—a shame to speak of  
them—

Among the heathen—

Sanctuary granted  
To bandit, thief, assassin—yea to him  
Who hacks his mother's throat—denied  
to him,

Who finds the Saviour in his mother  
tongue.

The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung  
down to swine—

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who  
will come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.

Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,  
meant

To course and range thro' all the world,  
should be

Tether'd to these dead pillars of the  
Church—

Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,  
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart,  
and life

Pass in the fire of Babylon ! but how  
long,

O Lord, how long !

My friend should meet me here.  
Here is the copse, the fountain and—a  
Cross !

To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor  
knees.

Rather to thee, green boscage, work of  
God,

Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfar-  
ing-tree !

Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn  
By this good Wiclif mountain down from  
heaven,

And speaking clearly in thy native  
tongue—

No Latin—He that thirsteth, come and  
drink !

Eh ! how I anger'd Arundel asking me  
To worship Holy Cross ! I spread mine  
arms,

God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and  
blood

And holier. That was heresy. (My good  
friend

By this time should be with me.)  
'Images ?'

'Bury them as God's truer images  
Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Penance ?'

'Fast,  
Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a man  
repent,

Do penance in his heart, God hears him.'  
'Heresy—

Not shriven, not saved ?' 'What profits  
an ill Priest'

Between me and my God ? I would not  
spurn

Good counsel of good friends, but shrive  
myself

No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.'  
(My friend is long in coming.) 'Pil-  
grimages ?'

'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-  
dances, vice.

The poor man's money gone to fat the  
friar.

Who reads of begging saints in Scripture ?  
—'Heresy'—

(Hath he been here—not found me—gone  
again ?

Have I mislearnt our place of meeting ?)  
'Bread—

Bread left after the blessing ?' how they  
stared,

That was their main test-question—  
glared at me !

'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He  
veils

His flesh in bread, body and bread  
together.'

Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd  
wolves,

'No bread, no bread. God's body !'  
Archbishop, Bishop,

Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers,  
Parish-clerks—

'No bread, no bread !'—'Authority of  
the Church,

Power of the keys !'—Then I, God help  
me, I

So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two  
whole days—

I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since  
Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth  
Into the church, had only prov'n them-  
selves

Poisoners, murderers. Well—God par-  
don all—

Me, them, and all the world—yea, that  
proud Priest,

That mock-meek mouth of utter Anti-  
christ,

That traitor to King Richard and the  
truth,

Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.

Amen !

Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life  
Be by me in my death.

Those three ! the fourth  
Was like the Son of God ! Not burnt  
were they.

On *them* the smell of burning had not  
past.

That was a miracle to convert the king.  
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel  
What miracle could turn ? *He* here  
again,

*He* thwarting their traditions of Him-  
self,

*He* would be found a heretic to Himself,  
And doom'd to burn alive.

So, caught, I burn.

Burn ? heathen men have borne as much  
as this,

For freedom, or the sake of those they  
loved,

Or some less cause, some cause far less  
than mine ;

For every other cause is less than mine.  
The moth will singe her wings, and  
sing'd return,

Her love of light quenching her fear of  
pain—

How now, my soul, we do not heed the  
fire ?

Faint-hearted ? tut !—faint-stomach'd !  
faint as I am,

God willing, I will burn for Him.

Who comes ?

A thousand marks are set upon my  
head.

Friend ?—foe perhaps—a tussle for it  
then !

Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well  
disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought  
bread with thee ?

I have not broken bread for fifty hours.

None ? I am damn'd already by the  
Priest

For holding there was bread where bread  
was none—

No bread. My friends await me yonder ?  
Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain ? Is  
it far ?

Not far. Climb first and reach me down  
thy hand.

I am not like to die for lack of bread,  
For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

## COLUMBUS

CHAINS, my good lord : in your raised  
brows I read  
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.  
We brought this iron from our isles of  
gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit  
him  
Whom once he rose from off his throne  
to greet  
Before his people, like his brother king ?  
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then  
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd  
herself

To meet me, roar'd my name ; the king,  
the queen

Bad me be seated, speak, and tell them all  
The story of my voyage, and while I  
spoke

The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace,  
be still !'

And when I ceased to speak, the king,  
the queen,

Sank from their thrones, and melted into  
tears,

And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and  
voice

In praise to God who led me thro' the  
waste.

And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to  
heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean !  
chains

For him who gave a new heaven, a new  
earth,

As holy John had prophesied of me,  
Gave glory and more empire to the kings  
Of Spain than all their battles ! chains  
for him

Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the  
Dragon's mouth,

And came upon the Mountain of the  
World,

And saw the rivers roll from Paradise !

Chains ! we are Admirals of the Ocean,  
we,

We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic  
queen—

Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals  
we—

Our title, which we never mean to yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,  
But our amends for all we might have  
done—

The vast occasion of our stronger life—  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in  
your Spain,

Lost, showing courts and kings a truth  
the babe

Will sail in with his milk hereafter—  
earth

A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca ? No.  
We fronted there the learning of all  
Spain,

All their cosmogonies, their astronomies :  
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the  
golden guess

Is morning-star to the full round of truth.  
No guess-work ! I was certain of my goal ;  
Some thought it heresy, but that would  
not hold.

King David call'd the heavens a hide, a  
tent

Spread over earth, and so this earth was  
flat :

Some cited old Lactantius : could it be  
That trees grew downward, rain fell up-  
ward, men

Walk'd like the fly on ceilings ? and be-  
sides,

The great Augustine wrote that none  
could breathe

Within the zone of heat ; so might there  
be

Two Adams, two mankinds, and that  
was clean

Against God's word : thus was I beaten  
back,

And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,  
And thought to turn my face from Spain,  
appeal

Once more to France or England ; but  
 our Queen  
 Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses  
 Were half-assured this earth might be a  
 sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
 All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
 And Holy Church, from whom I never  
 swerved  
 Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,  
 I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—  
 I sail'd  
 On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights  
 Of my first crew, their curses and their  
 groans.  
 The great flame-banner borne by Tene-  
 riffe,  
 The compass, like an old friend false at last  
 In our most need, appall'd them, and the  
 wind  
 Still westward, and the weedy seas—at  
 length  
 The landbird, and the branch with berries  
 on it,  
 The carven staff—and last the light, the  
 light  
 On Guanahani ! but I changed the name ;  
 San Salvador I call'd it ; and the light  
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad  
 sky  
 Of dawning over—not those alien palms,  
 The marvel of that fair new nature—not  
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
 East  
 Moriah with Jerusalem ; and I saw  
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat  
 Thro' all the homely town from jasper,  
 sapphire,  
 Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,  
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
 Jacynth, and amethyst—and those twelve  
 gates,  
 Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death  
 —I shall die—  
 I am written in the Lamb's own Book  
 of Life  
 To walk within the glory of the Lord

Sunless and moonless, utter light—but  
 no !

The Lord had sent this bright, strange  
 dream to me

To mind me of the secret vow I made  
 When Spain was waging war against  
 the Moor—

I strove myself with Spain against the  
 Moor.

There came two voices from the Sepul-  
 chre,

Two friars crying that if Spain should  
 oust

The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce  
 Soldan of Egypt, would break down and  
 raze

The blessed tomb of Christ ; whereon I  
 vow'd

That, if our Princes harken'd to my  
 prayer,

Whatever wealth I brought from that new  
 world

Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead  
 A new crusade against the Saracen,  
 And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold ? I had brought your Princes  
 gold enough

If left alone ! Being but a Genovese,  
 I am handled worse than had I been a  
 Moor,

And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,  
 And given the Great Khan's palaces to  
 the Moor,

Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester  
 John,

And cast it to the Moor : but *had* I  
 brought

From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all  
 The gold that Solomon's navies carried  
 home,

Would that have gilded *me* ? Blue blood  
 of Spain,

Tho' quartering your own royal arms of  
 Spain,

I have not : blue blood and black blood  
 of Spain,

The noble and the convict of Castile,  
 Howl'd me from Hispaniola ; for you  
 know



The flies at home, that ever swarm about  
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur  
down

Truth in the distance—these outbuzz'd  
me so

That even our prudent king, our righteous  
queen—

I pray'd them being so calumniated  
They would commission one of weight  
and worth

To judge between my slander'd self and  
me—

Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one  
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—  
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed—  
who sack'd

My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
loosed

My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,  
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing,  
gave

All but free leave for all to work the  
mines,

Drove me and my good brothers home in  
chains,

And gathering ruthless gold—a single  
piece

Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos  
—so

They tell me—weigh'd him down into the  
abysm—

The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,  
The seas of our discovering over-roll

Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,  
With what was mine, came happily to the  
shore.

*There* was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God

Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O  
my lord,

I swear to you I heard his voice between  
The thunders in the black Veragua  
nights,

'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!  
Have I not been about thee from thy  
birth?

Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-  
sea?

Set thee in light till time shall be no  
more?

Is it I who have deceived thee or the  
world?

Endure! thou hast done so well for men,  
that men

Cry out against thee: was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days  
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
drowning hope

Sank all but out of sight, I heard his  
voice,

'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the  
hand,

Fear not.' And I shall hear his voice  
again—

I know that he has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work his will—  
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,  
I lying here bedridden and alone,  
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
king—

The first discoverer starves—his followers,  
all

Flower into fortune—our world's way—  
and I,

Without a roof that I can call mine own,  
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,  
And seeing what a door for scoundrel  
scum

I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,  
Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain  
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—  
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,  
Their wives and children Spanish concu-  
bines,

Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in  
blood,

Some dead of hunger, some beneath the  
scourge,

Some over-labour'd, some by their own  
hands,—

Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,  
kill

Their babies at the breast for hate of  
Spain—

Ah God, the harmless people whom we  
found  
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise !  
Who took us for the very Gods from  
Heaven,  
And we have sent them very fiends from  
Hell ;  
And I myself, myself not blameless, I  
Could sometimes wish I had never led  
the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
Queen  
Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-  
forted !  
This creedless people will be brought to  
Christ  
And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who  
bore the Cross  
Thither, were excommunicated there,  
For curbing crimes that scandalised the  
Cross,  
By him, the Catalanian Minorite,  
Rome's Vicar in our Indies ? who believe  
These hard memorials of our truth to  
Spain  
Clung closer to us for a longer term  
Than any friend of ours at Court ? and yet  
Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd  
with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my  
bed,  
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are  
God's  
Own voice to justify the dead—perchance  
Spain once the most chivalric race on  
earth,  
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm  
on earth,  
So made by me, may seek to unbury me,  
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,  
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.  
Then some one standing by my grave  
will say,  
'Behold the bones of Christopher  
Colon'—

'Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean  
—the chains ?'—

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
Who then will have to answer, 'These  
same chains  
Bound these same bones back thro' the  
Atlantic sea,  
Which he unchain'd for all the world to  
come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls  
in Hell  
And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
As they do—for the moment. Stay, my  
son  
Is here anon : my son will speak for me  
Ablier than I can in these spasms that  
grind  
Bone against bone. You will not, One  
last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you  
tell  
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that  
one,  
Whose life has been no play with him  
and his  
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers,  
fights,  
Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and  
condoned—  
That I am loyal to him till the death,  
And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic  
Queen,  
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my  
first voyage,  
Whose hope was mine to spread the  
Catholic faith,  
Who wept with me when I return'd in  
chains,  
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,  
To whom I send my prayer by night and  
day—  
She is gone—but you will tell the King,  
that I,  
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd  
with pains  
Gain'd in the service of His Highness,  
yet  
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage.

And readier, if the King would hear, to  
lead

One last crusade against the Saracen,  
And save the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you  
have dared

Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor  
thanks!

I am but an alien and a Genovese.

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.  
A.D. 700)

### I

I WAS the chief of the race—he had  
stricken my father dead—

But I gather'd my fellows together, I  
swore I would strike off his head.

Each of them look'd like a king, and was  
noble in birth as in worth,

And each of them boasted he sprang from  
the oldest race upon earth.

Each was as brave in the fight as the  
bravest hero of song,

And each of them liefer had died than  
have done one another a wrong.

He lived on an isle in the ocean—we  
sail'd on a Friday morn—

He that had slain my father the day  
before I was born.

### II

And we came to the isle in the ocean,  
and there on the shore was he.

But a sudden blast blew us out and away  
thro' a boundless sea.

### III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we  
never had touch'd at before,

Where a silent ocean always broke on a  
silent shore,

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light  
without sound, and the long  
waterfalls

Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base  
of the mountain walls,

And the poplar and cypress unshaken by  
storm flourish'd up beyond sight,

And the pine shot aloft from the crag to  
an unbelievable height,

And high in the heaven above it there  
flicker'd a songless lark,

And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull  
couldn't low, and the dog couldn't  
bark.

And round it we went, and thro' it, but  
never a murmur, a breath—

It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it  
quiet as death,

And we hated the beautiful Isle, for  
whenever we strove to speak

Our voices were thinner and fainter than  
any flittermouse-shriek;

And the men that were mighty of tongue  
and could raise such a battle-cry

That a hundred who heard it would rush  
on a thousand lances and die—

O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so  
fluster'd with anger were they

They almost fell on each other; but after  
we sail'd away.

### IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we  
landed, a score of wild birds

Cried from the topmost summit with  
human voices and words;

Once in an hour they cried, and whenever  
their voices peal'd

The steer fell down at the plow and the  
harvest died from the field,

And the men dropt dead in the valleys  
and half of the cattle went lame,

And the roof sank in on the hearth, and  
the dwelling broke into flame;

And the shouting of these wild birds ran  
into the hearts of my crew,

Till they shouted along with the shout-  
ing and seized one another and  
slew;

But I drew them the one from the other;  
I saw that we could not stay,

And we left the dead to the birds and we  
sail'd with our wounded away.

## V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers :  
 their breath met us out on the seas,  
 For the Spring and the middle Summer  
 sat each on the lap of the breeze ;  
 And the red passion-flower to the cliffs,  
 and the dark-blue clematis, clung,  
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom the  
 long convolvulus hung ;  
 And the topmost spire of the mountain  
 was lilies in lieu of snow,  
 And the lilies like glaciers winded down,  
 running out below  
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the  
 blaze of gorse, and the blush  
 Of millions of roses that sprang without  
 leaf or a thorn from the bush ;  
 And the whole isle-side flashing down  
 from the peak without ever a tree  
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky  
 to the blue of the sea ;  
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and  
 vaunted our kith and our kin,  
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and  
 chanted the triumph of Finn,  
 Till each like a golden image was pollen'd  
 from head to feet  
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with  
 thirst in the middle-day heat .  
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
 blossom, but never a fruit !  
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we  
 hated the isle that was mute,  
 And we tore up the flowers by the million  
 and flung them in bight and bay,  
 And we left but a naked rock, and in  
 anger we sail'd away.

## VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits : all  
 round from the cliffs and the capes,  
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
 fathom of grapes,  
 And the warm melon lay like a little sun  
 on the tawny sand,  
 And the fig ran up from the beach and  
 rioted over the land,  
 And the mountain arose like a jewell'd  
 throne thro' the fragrant air,

Glowing with all-colour'd plums and with  
 golden masses of pear,  
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries  
 that flamed upon bine and vine,  
 But in every berry and fruit was the  
 poisonous pleasure of wine ;  
 And the peak of the mountain was apples,  
 the hugest that ever were seen,  
 And they prest, as they grew, on each other,  
 with hardly a leaflet between,  
 And all of them redder than rosiest health  
 or than utterest shame,  
 And setting, when Even descended, the  
 very sunset aflame ;  
 And we stay'd three days, and we gorged  
 and we madden'd, till every one  
 drew  
 His sword on his fellow to slay him, and  
 ever they struck and they slew ;  
 And myself, I had eaten but sparingly, and  
 fought till I sunder'd the fray,  
 Then I bad them remember my father's  
 death, and we sail'd away.

## VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire : we were  
 lured by the light from afar,  
 For the peak sent up one league of fire  
 to the Northern Star ;  
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but  
 scarcely could stand upright,  
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook  
 like a man in a mortal affright ;  
 We were giddy besides with the fruits we  
 had gorged, and so crazed that at  
 last  
 There were some leap'd into the fire ;  
 and away we sail'd, and we past  
 Over that undersea isle, where the water  
 is clearer than air :  
 Down we look'd : what a garden ! O  
 bliss, what a Paradise there !  
 Towers of a happier time, low down in  
 a rainbow deep  
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal  
 sleep !  
 And three of the gentlest and best of my  
 people, whate'er I could say,  
 Plunged head down in the sea, and the  
 Paradise trembled away.

## VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where  
 the heavens lean low on the land,  
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd  
 o'er us a sunbright hand,  
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side of  
 each man, as he rose from his  
 rest,  
 Bread enough for his need till the labour-  
 less day dipt under the West ;  
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it.  
 O never was time so good !  
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and  
 the boast of our ancient blood,  
 And we gazed at the wandering wave as  
 we sat by the gurgle of springs,  
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards  
 and the glories of fairy kings ;  
 But at length we began to be weary, to  
 sigh, and to stretch and yawn,  
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the  
 sunbright hand of the dawn,  
 For there was not an enemy near, but the  
 whole green Isle was our own,  
 And we took to playing at ball, and we  
 took to throwing the stone,  
 And we took to playing at battle, but  
 that was a perilous play,  
 For the passion of battle was in us, we  
 slew and we sail'd away.

## IX

And we past to the Isle of Witches and  
 heard their musical cry—  
 'Come to us, O come, come' in the  
 stormy red of a sky  
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of  
 dawn on the beautiful shapes,  
 For a wild witch naked as heaven stood  
 on each of the loftiest capes,  
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like  
 white sea-birds in a row,  
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced  
 on the wrecks in the sand below,  
 And a hundred splash'd from the ledges,  
 and bosom'd the burst of the  
 spray,  
 But I knew we should fall on each other,  
 and hastily sail'd away.

## X

And we came in an evil time to the Isle  
 of the Double Towers,  
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved  
 all over with flowers,  
 But an earthquake always moved in the  
 hollows under the dells,  
 And they shock'd on each other and butted  
 each other with clashing of bells,  
 And the daws flew out of the Towers and  
 jangled and wrangled in vain,  
 And the clash and boom of the bells rang  
 into the heart and the brain,  
 Till the passion of battle was on us, and  
 all took sides with the Towers,  
 There were some for the clean-cut stone,  
 there were more for the carven  
 flowers,  
 And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd  
 over us all the day,  
 For the one half slew the other, and after  
 we sail'd away.

## XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who  
 had sail'd with St. Brendan of  
 yore,  
 He had lived ever since on the Isle and  
 his winters were fifteen score,  
 And his voice was low as from other  
 worlds, and his eyes were sweet,  
 And his white hair sank to his heels and  
 his white beard fell to his feet,  
 And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let  
 be this purpose of thine !  
 Remember the words of the Lord when  
 he told us "Vengeance is mine !"  
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in war  
 or in single strife,  
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each  
 taken a life for a life,  
 Thy father had slain his father, how long  
 shall the murder last ?  
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer  
 the Past to be Past.'  
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and  
 we pray'd as we heard him pray,  
 And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and  
 sadly we sail'd away.

## XII

And we came to the Isle we were blown  
from, and thereon the shore was he,  
The man that had slain my father. I  
saw him and let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the trouble,  
the strife and the sin,  
When I landed again, with a tithe of my  
men, on the Isle of Finn.

## DE PROFUNDIS

## THE TWO GREETINGS

To H. T. AUGUST 11, 1852

## I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the  
deep,  
Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
Waste dawn of multitudinous - eddying  
light—

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
deep,  
Thro' all this changing world of change-  
less law,

And every phase of ever-heightening life,  
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,  
With this last moon, this crescent—her  
dark orb

Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest,  
darling boy ;

Our own ; a babe in lineament and limb  
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man ;  
Whose face and form are hers and mine  
in one,

Indissolubly married like our love ;  
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve  
This mortal race thy kin so well, that men  
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young  
life

Breaking with laughter from the dark ;  
and may

The fated channel where thy motion lives  
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy  
course

Along the years of haste and random youth  
Unshatter'd ; then full-current thro' full  
man :

And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,  
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,  
To that last deep where we and thou are  
still.

## II

## I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the  
deep,

From that great deep, before our world  
begins,

Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he  
will—

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
deep,

From that true world within the world  
we see,

Whereof our world is but the bounding  
shore—

Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
With this ninth moon, that sends the  
hidden sun

Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling  
boy.

## II

For in the world, which is not ours, They  
said

'Let us make man' and that which  
should be man,

From that one light no man can look upon,  
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and  
moons

And all the shadows. O dear Spirit  
half-lost

In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign  
That thou art thou—who wailest being  
born

And banish'd into mystery, and the pain  
Of this divisible-indivisible world

Among the numerable-innumerable

Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
space

In finite-infinite Time—our mortal veil  
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite  
One,

Who made thee unconceivably Thyself  
Out of His whole World-self and all in  
all—



Live thou ! and of the grain and husk,  
 the grape  
 And ivyberry, choose ; and still depart  
 From death to death thro' life and life,  
 and find  
 Nearer and ever nearer Him, who  
 wrought  
 Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
 But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,  
 With power on thine own act and on the  
 world.

THE HUMAN CRY

I

HALLOWED be Thy name—Halleluiah !—  
 Infinite Ideality !  
 Immeasurable Reality !  
 Infinite Personality !  
 Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah !

II

We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou  
 and in Thee ;  
 We feel we are something—*that* also has  
 come from Thee ;  
 We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt  
 help us to be.  
 Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah !

PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE 'NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fled to far and fast  
 To touch all shores, now leaving to the  
 skill  
 Of others their old craft seaworthy still,  
 Have charter'd this ; where, mindful of  
 the past,  
 Our true co-mates regather round the  
 mast ;  
 Of diverse tongue, but with a common  
 will  
 Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
 And crocus, to put forth and brave the  
 blast ;  
 For some, descending from the sacred  
 peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued  
 again  
 Their lot with ours to rove the world  
 about ;  
 And some are wilder comrades, sworn to  
 seek  
 If any golden harbour be for men  
 In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
 Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOK-  
 FIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew  
 you best,  
 Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth  
 my rhymes,  
 How oft we two have heard St. Mary's  
 chimes !  
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and  
 guest,  
 Would echo helpless laughter to your  
 jest !  
 How oft with him we paced that walk of  
 limes,  
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden  
 times,  
 Who loved you well ! Now both are gone  
 to rest.  
 You man of humorous-melancholy mark,  
 Dead of some inward agony—is it so ?  
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away !  
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark :  
 Σκιάς ὄψα—dream of a shadow, go—  
 God bless you. I shall join you in a  
 day.

MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle  
 sails,  
 They kept their faith, their freedom, on  
 the height,  
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and  
 night  
 Against the Turk ; whose inroad nowhere  
 scales  
 Their headlong passes, but his footstep  
 fails,

And red with blood the Crescent reels  
 from fight  
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone  
 flight  
 By thousands down the crags and thro'  
 the vales.  
 O smallest among peoples ! rough rock-  
 throne  
 Of Freedom ! warriors beating back the  
 swarm  
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,  
 Great Tsernogora ! never since thine own  
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake  
 the storm  
 Has breathed a race of mightier moun-  
 taineers.

### TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and  
 fears,

French of the French, and Lord of human  
 tears ;  
 Child-lover ; Bard whose fame-lit laurels  
 glance  
 Darkening the wreaths of all that would  
 advance,  
 Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy  
 peers ;  
 Weird Titan by thy winter weight of  
 years  
 As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of  
 France !  
 Who dost not love our England—so they  
 say ;  
 I know not—England, France, all man  
 to be  
 Will make one people ere man's race be  
 run :  
 And I, desiring that diviner day,  
 Yield thee full thanks for thy full  
 courtesy  
 To younger England in the boy my son.

## TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

### BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

#### I

- 1 **ATHELSTAN** King,  
 Lord among Earls,  
 Bracelet-bestower and  
 Baron of Barons,  
 He with his brother,  
 Edmund Atheling,  
 Gaining a lifelong  
 Glory in battle,  
 Slew with the sword-edge  
 There by Brunanburh,

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November 1876).

Brake the shield-wall,  
 Hew'd the lindenwood,<sup>2</sup>  
 Hack'd the battleshield,  
 Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

#### II

Theirs was a greatness  
 Got from their Grandsires—  
 Theirs that so often in  
 Strife with their enemies  
 Struck for their hoards and their hearths  
 and their homes.

#### III

Bow'd the spoiler,  
 Bent the Scotsman,  
 Fell the shipcrews  
 Doom'd to the death.  
 All the field with blood of the fighters  
 Flow'd, from when first the great  
 Sun-star of morningtide,

<sup>2</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

Lamp of the Lord God  
 Lord everlasting,  
 Glode over earth till the glorious creature  
 Sank to his setting.

## IV

There lay many a man  
 Marr'd by the javelin,  
 Men of the Northland  
 Shot over shield.  
 There was the Scotsman  
 Weary of war.

## V

We the West-Saxons,  
 Long as the daylight  
 Lasted, in companies  
 Troubled the track of the host that we  
 hated,  
 Grimly with swords that were sharp from  
 the grindstone,  
 Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before  
 us.

## VI

Mighty the Mercian,  
 Hard was his hand-play,  
 Sparing not any of  
 Those that with Anlaf,  
 Warriors over the  
 Weltering waters  
 Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
 Drew to this island :  
 Doom'd to the death.

## VII

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-  
 stroke,  
 Seven strong Earls of the army of Anlaf  
 Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,  
 Shipmen and Scotsmen.

## VIII

Then the Norse leader,  
 Dire was his need of it,  
 Few were his following,  
 Fled to his warship :  
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king  
 in it,  
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

## IX

Also the crafty one,  
 Constantinus,  
 Crept to his North again,  
 Hoar-headed hero !

## X

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
 The welcome of war-knives—  
 He that was reft of his  
 Folk and his friends that had  
 Fallen in conflict,  
 Leaving his son too  
 Lost in the carnage,  
 Mangled to morsels,  
 A youngster in war !

## XI

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
 The clash of the war-glaive—  
 Traitor and trickster  
 And spurner of treaties—  
 He nor had Anlaf  
 With armies so broken  
 A reason for bragging  
 That they had the better  
 In perils of battle  
 On places of slaughter—  
 The struggle of standards,  
 The rush of the javelins,  
 The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
 The wielding of weapons—  
 The play that they play'd with  
 The children of Edward.

## XII

Then with their nail'd prows  
 Parted the Norsemen, a  
 Blood-redden'd relic of  
 Javelins over  
 The jarring breaker, the deep-  
 sea billow,  
 Shaping their way toward Dy-  
 flen<sup>2</sup> again,  
 Shamed in their souls.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'the gathering of men.'    <sup>2</sup> Dublin.

## XIII

Also the brethren,  
King and Atheling,  
Each in his glory,  
Went to his own in his own West-Saxon-  
land,  
Glad of the war.

## XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,  
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—  
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it,  
and  
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend  
it, and  
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge  
it, and  
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

## XV

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge—  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories—  
Hapt in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who  
Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land.

## ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

ILIAD, xviii. 202

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and  
round  
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas  
flung  
Her fringed ægis, and around his head  
The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden  
cloud,

And from it lighted an all-shining  
flame.  
As when a smoke from a city goes to  
heaven  
Far off from out an island girt by foes,  
All day the men contend in grievous  
war  
From their own city, but with set of  
sun  
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the  
glare  
Flies streaming, if perchance the neigh-  
bours round  
May see, and sail to help them in the  
war;  
So from his head the splendour went to  
heaven.  
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,  
nor join'd  
The Achæans—honouring his wise  
mother's word—  
There standing, shouted, and Pallas far  
away  
Call'd; and a boundless panic shook the  
foe.  
For like the clear voice when a trumpet  
shrills,  
Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a  
town,  
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;  
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês  
Was heard among the Trojans, all their  
hearts  
Were troubled, and the full-maned horses  
whirl'd  
The chariots backward, knowing griefs  
at hand;  
And sheer-astounded were the charioteers  
To see the dread, unweariable fire  
That always o'er the great Peleion's  
head  
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made  
it burn.  
Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty  
shout,  
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and  
allies;  
And there and then twelve of their noblest  
died  
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA  
ON HER MARRIAGE

O YOU that were eyes and light to the  
King till he past away  
From the darkness of life—  
He saw not his daughter—he blest her :  
the blind King sees you to-day,  
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN  
ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY

NOT here ! the white North has thy  
bones ; and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage now  
Toward no earthly pole.

## TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE  
FLORENTINES)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years,  
and grown  
In power, and ever growest, since thine  
own  
Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,  
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,  
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from  
me,  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades  
away.

TIRESIAS  
AND OTHER POEMS

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING,

WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST,  
AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST,  
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

## TO E. FITZGERALD

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb grange,  
Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile ;  
Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,  
And while your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,  
Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares  
Whatever moved in that full sheet  
Let down to Peter at his prayers ;  
Who live on milk and meal and grass ;  
And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,

And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied'  
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light  
To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half-spiritual heigh  
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again  
One night when earth was winter-black,  
And all the heavens flash'd in frost ;  
And on me, half-asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,  
And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there roll'd  
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes  
Of Eshcol hugeness ; for the cold  
Without, and warmth within me, wrought  
To mould the dream ; but none can say  
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,  
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,

Than which I know no version done  
 In English more divinely well ;  
 A planet equal to the sun  
 Which cast it, that large infidel  
 Your Omar ; and your Omar drew  
 Full-handed plaudits from our best  
 In modern letters, and from two,  
 Old friends outvaluing all the rest,  
 Two voices heard on earth no more ;  
 But we old friends are still alive,  
 And I am nearing seventy-four,  
 While you have touch'd at seventy-five,  
 And so I send a birthday line  
 Of greeting ; and my son, who dipt  
 In some forgotten book of mine  
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
 And dating many a year ago,  
 Has hit on this, which you will take  
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know  
 Less for its own than for the sake  
 Of one recalling gracious times,  
 When, in our younger London days,  
 You found some merit in my rhymes,  
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

### TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the years of old,  
 While yet the blessed daylight made itself  
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and  
 woke  
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen  
 to seek  
 The meanings ambush'd under all they  
 saw,  
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,  
 What omens may foreshadow fate to man  
 And woman, and the secret of the Gods.  
 My son, the Gods, despite of human  
 prayer,  
 Are slower to forgive than human kings.  
 The great God, Arês, burns in anger still  
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from  
 Tyre,  
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,  
 who found  
 Beside the springs of Dircê, smote, and  
 still'd  
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,  
 The dragon, which our trembling fathers  
 call'd

The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,  
 When but thine age, by age as winter-  
 white  
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me  
 yearn  
 For larger glimpses of that more than man  
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and  
 lays the deep,  
 Yet loves and hates with mortal hates  
 and loves,  
 And moves unseen among the ways of  
 men.  
 Then, in my wanderings all the lands  
 that lie  
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my  
 wont  
 Was more to scale the highest of the  
 heights  
 With some strange hope to see the nearer  
 God.

One naked peak—the sister of the sun  
 Would climb from out the dark, and  
 linger there  
 To silver all the valleys with her shafts—  
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy  
 term  
 Of years, I lay ; the winds were dead  
 for heat ;  
 The noonday crag made the hand burn ;  
 and sick  
 For shadow—not one bush was near—  
 I rose  
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
 Found silence in the hollows underneath.  
 There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath  
 In anger ; yet one glittering foot disturb'd  
 The lucid well ; one snowy knee was prest  
 Against the margin flowers ; a dreadful  
 light  
 Came from her golden hair, her golden  
 helm  
 And all her golden armour on the grass,  
 And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes  
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew  
 dark  
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said  
 ' Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen  
 too much,



And speak the truth that no man may believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives

Behind this darkness, I behold her still,  
Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,

Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,

Ineffable beauty; out of whom, at a glance,

And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd  
The power of prophesying—but to me  
No power—so chain'd and coupled with the curse

Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard

And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,

Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunderbolt,

And angers of the Gods for evil done  
And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate,  
Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd would roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,

To cast wise words among the multitude  
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours

Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain  
Would each waste each, and bring on both the yoke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb

The madness of our cities and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear  
My warning that the tyranny of one  
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?  
My counsel that the tyranny of all  
Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to  
aught that lives,

And these blind hands were useless in their wars.

O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,  
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,  
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's heart—

Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue, rear'd

To some great citizen, win all praise from all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'

In vain!

Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those

Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd  
Within themselves, immersing, each, his urn

In his own well, draw solace as he may.

Menceceus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset sap  
Our seven high gates, and what a weight of war

Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,

Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted horse

That grind the glebe to powder! Stony showers

Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash  
Along the sounding walls. Above, below,

Shock after shock, the song-built towers and gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddering

War-thunder of iron rams; and from within

The city comes a murmur void of joy,  
Lest she be taken captive—maidens, wives,

And mothers with their babblers of the dawn,

And oldest age in shadow from the night,

Falling about their shrines before their Gods,

And wailing 'Save us.'

And they wail to thee!

These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine own,

See this, that only in thy virtue lies

The saving of our Thebes; for, yesternight,

To me, the great God Arès, whose one bliss

Is war, and human sacrifice—himself  
 Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet  
 tipt

With stormy light as on a mast at sea,  
 Stood out before a darkness, crying  
 'Thebes,

Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I  
 loathe

The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these  
 By his own hand,—if one of these——'

My son,  
 No sound is breathed so potent to  
 coerce,

And to conciliate, as their names who  
 dare

For that sweet mother land which gave  
 them birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,  
 Graven on memorial columns, are a  
 song

Heard in the future; few, but more than  
 wall

And rampart, their examples reach a  
 hand

Far thro' all years, and everywhere they  
 meet

And kindle generous purpose, and the  
 strength

To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best  
 end

Be to end well! and thou refusing this,  
 Unvenerable will thy memory be  
 While men shall move the lips: but if  
 thou dare—

Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus  
 —then

No stone is fitted in yon marble girth  
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious  
 doom,

Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy  
 name

To every hoof that clangs it, and the  
 springs

Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,  
 Heard from the roofs by night, will mur-  
 mur thee

To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro'  
 thee shall stand

Firm-based with all her Gods.

### The Dragon's cave

Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing  
 vines—

Where once he dwelt and whence he  
 roll'd himself

At dead of night—thou knowest, and  
 that smooth rock

Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late  
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings  
 drawn back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to  
 Thebes.

There blanch the bones of whom she  
 slew, and these

Mixt with her own, because the fierce  
 beast found

A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself  
 Dead in her rage: but thou art wise  
 enough,

Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the  
 curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the  
 truth

Believe I speak it, let thine own hand  
 strike

Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench  
 The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge  
 Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—  
 thou

Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the  
 stars

Send no such light upon the ways of men  
 As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there  
 Thou, that hast never known the embrace  
 of love,

Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!  
 I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!  
 He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,  
 I would that I were gather'd to my rest,  
 And mingled with the famous kings of  
 old,

On whom about their ocean-islets flash  
 The faces of the Gods—the wise man's  
 word,

Here trampled by the populace underfoot,  
 There crown'd with worship—and these  
 eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot  
whirl

About the goal again, and hunters race  
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-  
kings,

In height and prowess more than human,  
strive

Again for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears  
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales  
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-  
fume

Of those who mix all odour to the Gods  
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

‘One height and one far-shining fire’

And while I fancied that my friend  
For this brief idyll would require

A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,  
If I should deem it over nice—

The tolling of his funeral bell

Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
And mixt the dream of classic times

And all the phantoms of the dream,  
With present grief, and made the rhymes,  
That miss’d his living welcome, seem

Like would-be guests an hour too late,

Who down the highway moving on  
With easy laughter find the gate

Is bolted, and the master gone.

Gone into darkness, that full light

Of friendship! past, in sleep, away

By night, into the deeper night!

The deeper night? A clearer day  
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—

If night, what barren toil to be!

What life, so maim’d by night, were  
worth

Our living out? Not mine to me

Remembering all the golden hours

Now silent, and so many dead,

And him the last; and laying flowers,

This wreath, above his honour’d head,

And praying that, when I from hence

Shall fade with him into the unknown,

My close of earth’s experience

May prove as peaceful as his own.

## THE WRECK

### I

HIDE me, Mother! my Fathers belong’d  
to the church of old,

I am driven by storm and sin and death  
to the ancient fold,

I cling to the Catholic Cross once more,  
to the Faith that saves,

My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,  
and the roar of waves,

My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a  
noble name,

I am flung from the rushing tide of the  
world as a waif of shame,

I am roused by the wail of a child, and  
awake to a livid light,

And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted  
a grave by night,

I would hide from the storm without, I  
would flee from the storm within,

I would make my life one prayer for a  
soul that died in his sin,

I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was  
the deeper fall;

I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face,  
I will tell you all.

### II

He that they gave me to, Mother, a  
heedless and innocent bride—

I never have wrong’d his heart, I have  
only wounded his pride—

Spain in his blood and the Jew—dark-  
visaged, stately and tall—

A princelier-looking man never stept thro’  
a Prince’s hall.

And who, when his anger was kindled,  
would venture to give him the nay?

And a man men fear is a man to be loved  
by the women they say.

And I could have loved him too, if the  
blossom can doat on the blight,

Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost  
that sears it at night;

He would open the books that I prized,  
and toss them away with a yawn,

Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which  
 my nature was drawn,  
 The word of the Poet by whom the deeps  
 of the world are stir'd,  
 The music that robes it in language beneath  
 and beyond the word !  
 My Shelley would fall from my hands when  
 he cast a contemptuous glance  
 From where he was poring over his  
 Tables of Trade and Finance ;  
 My hands, when I heard him coming,  
 would drop from the chords or the  
 keys,  
 But ever I fail'd to please him, however  
 I strove to please—  
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the  
 city, and there  
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances of  
 dividend, consol, and share—  
 And at home if I sought for a kindly  
 caress, being woman and weak,  
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow  
 on the cheek :  
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when I  
 held it aloft in my joy,  
 He look'd at it coldly, and said to me  
 'Pity it isn't a boy.'  
 The one thing given me, to love and to  
 live for, glanced at in scorn !  
 The child that I felt I could die for—as  
 if she were basely born !  
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted  
 now in a tomb ;  
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed  
 my heart to the gloom ;  
 I threw myself all abroad—I would play  
 my part with the young  
 By the low foot-lights of the world—and  
 I caught the wreath that was flung.

## III

Mother, I have not—however their  
 tongues may have babbled of me—  
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all  
 but a dwarf was he,  
 And all but a hunchback too ; and I  
 look'd at him, first, askance,  
 With pity—not he the knight for an  
 amorous girl's romance !

Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in  
 the light of a dowerless smile,  
 Having lands at home and abroad in a  
 rich West-Indian isle ;  
 But I came on him once at a ball, the  
 heart of a listening crowd—  
 Why, what a brow was there ! he was  
 seated—speaking aloud  
 To women, the flower of the time, and  
 men at the helm of state—  
 Flowing with easy greatness and touch-  
 ing on all things great,  
 Science, philosophy, song—till I felt my-  
 self ready to weep  
 For I knew not what, when I heard that  
 voice,—as mellow and deep  
 As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd  
 from an organ,—roll  
 Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice  
 was the voice of the soul ;  
 And the sun of the soul made day in the  
 dark of his wonderful eyes.  
 Here was the hand that would help me,  
 would heal me—the heart that  
 was wise !  
 And he, poor man, when he learnt that  
 I hated the ring I wore,  
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd  
 me with sorrow for evermore.

## IV

For I broke the bond. That day my  
 nurse had brought me the child.  
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but it  
 coo'd to the Mother and smiled.  
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with  
 baby?' She shook her head,  
 And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it, and  
 turn'd in her haste and fled.

## V

Low warm winds had gently breathed us  
 away from the land—  
 Ten long sweet summer days upon deck,  
 sitting hand in hand—  
 When he clothed a naked mind with the  
 wisdom and wealth of his own,  
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave to  
 his intellectual throne,

When he coin'd into English gold some  
treasure of classical song,  
When he flouted a statesman's error, or  
flamed at a public wrong,  
When he rose as it were on the wings of  
an eagle beyond me, and past  
Over the range and the change of the  
world from the first to the last,  
When he spoke of his tropical home in  
the canes by the purple tide,  
And the high star-crowns of his palms on  
the deep-wooded mountain-side,  
And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt  
to the brink of his bay,  
And trees like the towers of a minster,  
the sons of a winterless day.  
'Paradise there!' so he said, but I seem'd  
in Paradise then  
With the first great love I had felt for the  
first and greatest of men;  
Ten long days of summer and sin—if it  
must be so—  
But days of a larger light than I ever  
again shall know—  
Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life  
to my latest breath;  
'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in truest  
Love no Death.'

## VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble  
plaintively sweet  
Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell  
fluttering down at my feet;  
I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled  
it, Stephen and I,  
But it died, and I thought of the child  
for a moment, I scarce know why.

## VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as  
many will say,  
My sin to my desolate little one found  
me at sea on a day,  
When her orphan wail came borne in the  
shriek of a growing wind,  
And a voice rang out in the thunders of  
Ocean and Heaven 'Thou hast  
sinn'd.'

And down in the cabin were we, for the  
towering crest of the tides  
Plunged on the vessel and swept in a  
cataract off from her sides,  
And ever the great storm grew with a  
howl and a hoot of the blast  
In the rigging, voices of hell—then came  
the crash of the mast.  
'The wages of sin is death,' and there I  
began to weep,  
'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast  
me into the deep,  
For ah God, what a heart was mine to  
forsake her even for you.'  
'Never the heart among women,' he said,  
'more tender and true.'  
'The heart! not a mother's heart, when  
I left my darling alone.'  
'Comfort yourself, for the heart of the  
father will care for his own.'  
'The heart of the father will spurn her,'  
I cried, 'for the sin of the wife,  
The cloud of the mother's shame will  
enfold her and darken her life.'  
Then his pale face twitch'd; 'O Stephen,  
I love you, I love you, and yet'—  
As I lean'd away from his arms—'would  
God, we had never met!'  
And he spoke not—only the storm; till  
after a little, I yearn'd  
For his voice again, and he call'd to me  
'Kiss me!' and there—as I  
turn'd—  
'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him, I  
clung to the sinking form,  
And the storm went roaring above us,  
and he—was out of the storm.

## VIII

And then, then, Mother, the ship stag-  
ger'd under a thunderous shock,  
That shook us asunder, as if she had  
struck and crash'd on a rock;  
For a huge sea smote every soul from the  
decks of The Falcon but one;  
All of them, all but the man that was  
lash'd to the helm had gone;  
And I fell—and the storm and the days  
went by, but I knew no more—

Lost myself—lay like the dead by the  
 dead on the cabin floor,  
 Dead to the death beside me, and lost to  
 the loss that was mine,  
 With a dim dream, now and then, of a  
 hand giving bread and wine,  
 Till I woke from the trance, and the ship  
 stood still, and the skies were  
 blue,  
 But the face I had known, O Mother,  
 was not the face that I knew.

## IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw  
 so amazed me, that I  
 Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would  
 fling myself over and die !  
 But one—he was waving a flag—the one  
 man left on the wreck—  
 ‘Woman’—he graspt at my arm—‘stay  
 there’—I crouch’d upon deck—  
 ‘We are sinking, and yet there’s hope :  
 look yonder,’ he cried, ‘a sail’  
 In a tone so rough that I broke into  
 passionate tears, and the wail  
 Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat  
 was nearing us—then  
 All on a sudden I thought, I shall look  
 on the child again.

## X

They lower’d me down the side, and  
 there in the boat I lay  
 With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home,  
 as we glided away,  
 And I sigh’d, as the low dark hull dipt  
 under the smiling main,  
 ‘Had I stay’d with *him*, I had now—  
 with *him*—been out of my pain.’

## XI

They took us aboard: the crew were  
 gentle, the captain kind ;  
 But I was the lonely slave of an often-  
 wandering mind ;  
 For whenever a rougher gust might  
 tumble a stormier wave,  
 ‘O Stephen,’ I moan’d, ‘I am coming  
 to thee in thine Ocean-grave.’

And again, when a balmier breeze curl’d  
 over a peacefuller sea,  
 I found myself moaning again ‘O child,  
 I am coming to thee.’

## XII

The broad white brow of the Isle—that  
 bay with the colour’d sand—  
 Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we  
 drew to the land ;  
 All so quiet the ripple would hardly  
 blanch into spray  
 At the feet of the cliff ; and I pray’d—  
 ‘my child’—for I still could  
 pray—  
 ‘May her life be as blissfully calm, be  
 never gloom’d by the curse  
 Of a sin, not hers !’

Was it well with the child ?

I wrote to the nurse  
 Who had borne my flower on her hireling  
 heart ; and an answer came  
 Not from the nurse—nor yet to the wife  
 —to her maiden name !  
 I shook as I open’d the letter—I knew  
 that hand too well—  
 And from it a scrap, clipt out of the  
 ‘deaths’ in a paper, fell.  
 ‘Ten long sweet summer days’ of fever,  
 and want of care !  
 And gone—that day of the storm—O  
 Mother, she came to me there.

## DESPAIR

A man and his wife having lost faith in a God,  
 and hope of a life to come, and being utterly  
 miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by  
 drowning. The woman is drowned, but the man  
 rescued by a minister of the sect he had aban-  
 doned.

## I

Is it you, that preach’d in the chapel  
 there looking over the sand ?  
 Follow’d us too that night, and dogg’d  
 us, and drew me to land ?

## II

What did I feel that night ? You are  
 curious. How should I tell ?



Does it matter so much what I felt?  
You rescued me—yet—was it  
well

That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,  
between me and the deep and my  
doom,

Three days since, three more dark days  
of the Godless gloom

Of a life without sun, without health, with-  
out hope, without any delight

In anything here upon earth? but ah

God, that night, that night

When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse  
there on the fatal neck

Of land running out into rock—they had  
saved many hundreds from wreck—

Glared on our way toward death, I re-  
member I thought, as we past,

Does it matter how many they saved?  
we are all of us wreck'd at last—

'Do you fear?' and there came thro' the  
roar of the breaker a whisper, a  
breath,

'Fear? am I not with you? I am  
frighted at life not death.'

## III

And the suns of the limitless Universe  
sparkled and shone in the sky,

Flashing with fires as of God, but we  
knew that their light was a lie—

Bright as with deathless hope—but,  
however they sparkled and shone,

The dark little worlds running round  
them were worlds of woe like our  
own—

No soul in the heaven above, no soul on  
the earth below,

A fiery scroll written over with lamenta-  
tion and woe.

## IV

See, we were nursed in the drear night-  
fold of your fatalist creed,

And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we  
had hoped for a dawn indeed,

When the light of a Sun that was coming  
would scatter the ghosts of the  
Past,

And the cramping creeds that had  
madden'd the peoples would  
vanish at last,

And we broke away from the Christ, our  
human brother and friend,

For He spoke, or it seem'd that He  
spoke, of a Hell without help,  
without end.

## V

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the  
promise had faded away;

We had past from a cheerless night to  
the glare of a drearier day;

He is only a cloud and a smoke who was  
once a pillar of fire,

The guess of a worm in the dust and the  
shadow of its desire—

Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the  
weak trodden down by the strong,

Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre,  
murder, and wrong.

## VI

O we poor orphans of nothing—alone on  
that lonely shore—

Born of the brainless Nature who knew  
not that which she bore!

Trusting no longer that earthly flower  
would be heavenly fruit—

Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls  
—and to die with the brute—

## VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity: I  
know you of old—

Small pity for those that have ranged from  
the narrow warmth of your fold,

Where you bawl'd the dark side of your  
faith and a God of eternal rage,

Till you flung us back on ourselves, and  
the human heart, and the Age.

## VIII

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—was  
in her and in me,

Helpless, taking the place of the pitying  
God that should be!

Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an  
 idiot power,  
 And pity for our own selves on an earth  
 that bore not a flower ;  
 Pity for all that suffers on land or in air  
 or the deep,  
 And pity for our own selves till we long'd  
 for eternal sleep.

## IX

'Lightly step over the sands ! the waters  
 —you hear them call !  
 Life with its anguish, and horrors, and  
 errors—away with it all !'  
 And she laid her hand in my own—she  
 was always loyal and sweet—  
 Till the points of the foam in the dusk  
 came playing about our feet.  
*There* was a strong sea-current would  
 sweep us out to the main.  
 'Ah God' tho' I felt as I spoke I was  
 taking the name in vain—  
 'Ah God' and we turn'd to each other,  
 we kiss'd, we embraced, she and I,  
 Knowing the Love we were used to be-  
 lieve everlasting would die :  
 We had read their know-nothing books  
 and we lean'd to the darker side—  
 Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps,  
 perhaps, if we died, if we died ;  
 We never had found Him on earth, this  
 earth is a fatherless Hell—  
 'Dear Love, for ever and ever, for ever  
 and ever farewell,'  
 Never a cry so desolate, not since the  
 world began,  
 Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the  
 coming of man !

## X

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and  
 you saved me, a valueless life.  
 Not a grain of gratitude mine ! You  
 have parted the man from the wife.  
 I am left alone on the land, she is all  
 alone in the sea ;  
 If a curse meant ought, I would curse  
 you for not having let me be.

## XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was drunk  
 with the water, it seems ;  
 I had past into perfect quiet at length  
 out of pleasant dreams,  
 And the transient trouble of drowning—  
 what was it when match'd with  
 the pains  
 Of the hellish heat of a wretched life  
 rushing back thro' the veins ?

## XII

Why should I live ? one son had forged  
 on his father and fled,  
 And if I believed in a God, I would  
 thank him, the other is dead,  
 And there was a baby-girl, that had  
 never look'd on the light :  
 Happiest she of us all, for she past from  
 the night to the night.

## XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-  
 born, her glory, her boast,  
 Struck hard at the tender heart of the  
 mother, and broke it almost ;  
 Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever  
 in endless time,  
 Does it matter so much whether crown'd  
 for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime ?

## XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood  
 there, naked, amazed  
 In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd  
 myself turning crazed,  
 And I would not be mock'd in a mad-  
 house ! and she, the delicate wife,  
 With a grief that could only be cured, if  
 cured, by the surgeon's knife,—

## XV

Why should we bear with an hour of  
 torture, a moment of pain,  
 If every man die for ever, if all his griefs  
 are in vain,  
 And the homeless planet at length will be  
 wheel'd thro' the silence of space,

Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing  
race,

When the worm shall have writhed its  
last, and its last brother - worm  
will have fled

From the dead fossil skull that is left in  
the rocks of an earth that is dead ?

## XVI

Have I crazed myself over their horrible  
infidel writings? O yes,

For these are the new dark ages, you see,  
of the popular press,

When the bat comes out of his cave, and  
the owls are whooping at noon,

And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill  
and crows to the sun and the  
moon,

Till the Sun and the Moon of our science  
are both of them turn'd into blood,

And Hope will have broken her heart,  
running after a shadow of good ;

For their knowing and know-nothing  
books are scatter'd from hand to  
hand—

*We* have knelt in your know-all chapel  
too looking over the sand.

## XVII

What ! I should call on that Infinite  
Love that has served us so well ?

Infinite cruelty rather that made ever-  
lasting Hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and  
does what he will with his own ;

Better our dead brute mother who never  
has heard us groan !

## XVIII

Hell ? if the souls of men were immortal,  
as men have been told,

The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and  
the miser would yearn for his gold,

And so there were Hell for ever ! but  
were there a God as you say,

His Love would have power over Hell  
till it utterly vanish'd away.

## XIX

Ah yet—I have had some glimmer, at  
times, in my gloomiest woe,

Of a God behind all—after all—the great  
God for aught that I know ;

But the God of Love and of Hell to-  
gether—they cannot be thought,

If there be such a God, may the Great  
God curse him and bring him to  
nought !

## XX

Blasphemy ! whose is the fault ? is it  
mine ? for why would you save

A madman to vex you with wretched  
words, who is best in his grave ?

Blasphemy ! ay, why not, being damn'd  
beyond hope of grace ?

O would I were yonder with her, and  
away from your faith and your  
face !

Blasphemy ! true ! I have scared you  
pale with my scandalous talk,

But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all in  
the way that you walk.

## XXI

Hence ! she is gone ! can I stay ? can I  
breathe divorced from the Past ?

You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I  
do not escape you at last.

Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find  
it a *felo-de-se*,

And the stake and the cross-road, fool,  
if you will, does it matter to me ?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ

From out his ancient city came a Seer

Whom one that loved, and honour'd  
him, and yet

Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his  
hand

A scroll of verse—till that old man before

A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd  
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and  
spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem to  
draw  
From yon dark cave, but, son, the source  
is higher,  
Yon summit half-a-league in air—and  
higher,  
The cloud that hides it—higher still, the  
heavens  
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout  
The cloud descended. Force is from the  
heights.  
I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the  
hills.  
What hast thou there? Some deathsong  
for the Ghouls  
To make their banquet relish? let me  
read.

“How far thro’ all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard!  
What power but the bird’s could make  
This music in the bird?  
How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!  
And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?  
But man to-day is fancy’s fool  
As man hath ever been.  
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen.”

If thou would’st hear the Nameless, and  
wilt dive  
Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,  
There, brooding by the central altar, thou  
May’st haply learn the Nameless hath a  
voice,  
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,  
As if thou knewest, tho’ thou canst not  
know;  
For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake  
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there

But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,  
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath,  
within  
The blue of sky and sea, the green of  
earth,  
And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,  
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,  
Or even than the Nameless is to me.  
And when thou sendest thy free soul  
thro’ heaven,  
Nor understandest bound nor boundless-  
ness,  
Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred  
names.  
And if the Nameless should withdraw  
from all  
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world  
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

“And since — from when this earth  
began—  
The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name”—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O  
my son,  
Nor canst thou prove the world thou  
movest in,  
Thou canst not prove that thou art body  
alone,  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit  
alone,  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both  
in one:  
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no  
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay my  
son,  
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak  
with thee,  
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
For nothing worthy proving can be  
proven,  
Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be  
wise,  
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of  
Faith!

She feels not in the storm of warring  
words,  
She brightens at the clash of 'Yes' and  
'No,'  
She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the  
Worst,  
She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,  
She spies the summer thro' the winter  
bud,  
She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
falls,  
She hears the lark within the songless egg,  
She finds the fountain where they wail'd  
'Mirage'!

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
The mind in me and you?  
Or power as of the Gods gone blind  
Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
That none but Gods could build this  
house of ours,  
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
All work of man, yet, like all work of  
man,  
A beauty with defect—till That which  
knows,  
And is not known, but felt thro' what we  
feel  
Within ourselves is highest, shall descend  
On this half-deed, and shape it at the  
last  
According to the Highest in the Highest.

"What Power but the Years that make  
And break the vase of clay,  
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
The bloom that fades away?  
What rulers but the Days and Hours  
That cancel weal with woe,  
And wind the front of youth with flowers,  
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing  
by,  
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and  
shade,  
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or  
Pain;

But with the Nameless is nor Day nor  
Hour;  
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from  
thought to thought,  
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the  
Eternal Now:  
This double seeming of the single world!—  
My words are like the babblings in a  
dream  
Of nightmare, when the babblings break  
the dream.  
But thou be wise in this dream-world of  
ours,  
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
But make the passing shadow serve thy  
will.

"The years that made the stripling wise  
Undo their work again,  
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
The last and least of men;  
Who clings to earth, and once would dare  
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,  
And now one breath of cooler air  
Would loose him from his hold;  
His winter chills him to the root,  
He withers marrow and mind;  
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
Is jutting thro' the rind;  
The tiger spasms tear his chest,  
The palsy wags his head;  
The wife, the sons, who love him best  
Would fain that he were dead;  
The griefs by which he once was wrung  
Were never worth the while"—

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow  
life  
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the  
past  
Is feebler than his knees;  
The passive sailor wrecks at last  
In ever-silent seas;

The warrior hath forgot his arms,  
 The Learned all his lore ;  
 The changing market frets or charms  
 The merchant's hope no more ;  
 The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,  
 And now is lost in cloud ;  
 The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
 To mix with what he plow'd ;  
 The poet whom his Age would quote  
 As heir of endless fame—  
 He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,  
 Not even his own name.  
 For man has overlived his day,  
 And, darkening in the light,  
 Scarce feels the senses break away  
 To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird can fly.

"The years that when my Youth began  
 Had set the lily and rose  
 By all my ways where'er they ran,  
 Have ended mortal foes ;  
 My rose of love for ever gone,  
 My lily of truth and trust—  
 They made her lily and rose in one,  
 And changed her into dust.  
 O rosetree planted in my grief,  
 And growing, on her tomb,  
 Her dust is greenening in your leaf,  
 Her blood is in your bloom.  
 O slender lily waving there,  
 And laughing back the light,  
 In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'  
 When all is dark as night."

My son, the world is dark with griefs and  
 graves,  
 So dark that men cry out against the  
 Heavens.  
 Who knows but that the darkness is in  
 man ?  
 The doors of Night may be the gates of  
 Light ;  
 For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and  
 then  
 Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou glory  
 in all  
 The splendours and the voices of the  
 world !

And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet  
 No phantoms, watching from a phantom  
 shore,  
 Await the last and largest sense to make  
 The phantom walls of this illusion fade,  
 And show us that the world is wholly fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years  
 As laughter over wine,  
 And vain the laughter as the tears,  
 O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that weep  
 And all that breathe are one  
 Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
 That moves, and all is gone."

But that one ripple on the boundless deep  
 Feels that the deep is boundless, and  
 itself  
 For ever changing form, but evermore  
 One with the boundless motion of the  
 deep.

"Yet wine and laughter friends ! and set  
 The lamps alight, and call  
 For golden music, and forget  
 The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my  
 son—  
 But earth's dark forehead flings athwart  
 the heavens  
 Her shadow crown'd with stars—and  
 yonder—out  
 To northward—some that never set, but  
 pass  
 From sight and night to lose themselves  
 in day.  
 I hate the black negation of the bier,  
 And wish the dead, as happier than our-  
 selves  
 And higher, having climb'd one step  
 beyond  
 Our village miseries, might be borne in  
 white  
 To burial or to burning, hymn'd from  
 hence  
 With songs in praise of death, and  
 crown'd with flowers !



"O worms and maggots of to-day  
Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word  
Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

"Tho' some have gleams or so they say  
Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft  
On me, when boy, there came what then  
I call'd,

Who knew no books and no philosophies,  
In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the  
Past.'

The first gray streak of earliest summer-  
dawn,

The last long stripe of waning crimson  
gloom,

As if the late and early were but one—  
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a  
flower

Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost  
and gone!'

A breath, a whisper—some divine fare-  
well—

Desolate sweetness—far and far away—  
What had he loved, what had he lost,  
the boy?

I know not and I speak of what has been.  
And more, my son! for more than  
once when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
The word that is the symbol of myself,  
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,  
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs,  
the limbs

Were strange not mine—and yet no shade  
of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self  
The gain of such large life as match'd  
with ours

Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in  
words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
world.

"And idle gleams will come and go,  
But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of the  
Sun.

"And Night and Shadow rule below  
When only Day should reign."

And Day and Night are children of the  
Sun,

And idle gleams to thee are light to me.  
Some say, the Light was father of the  
Night,

And some, the Night was father of the  
Light,

No night no day!—I touch thy world  
again—

No ill no good! such counter-terms, my  
son,

Are border-races, holding, each its own  
By endless war: but night enough is there  
In yon dark city: get thee back: and  
since

The key to that weird casket, which for  
thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor  
mine,

But in the hand of what is more than man,  
Or in man's hand when man is more than  
man,

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow men,  
And make thy gold thy vassal not thy  
king,

And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,  
And send the day into the darken'd heart;

Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,  
A dying echo from a falling wall;

Nor care—for Hunger hath the Evil eye—  
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold

Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous  
looms;

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,  
Nor drown thyself with flies in honied

wine;

Nor thou beateful, like a handled bee,  
And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;

Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,  
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wan-  
tonness;

And more—think well! Do-well will  
follow thought,

And in the fatal sequence of this world

An evil thought may soil thy children's  
blood ;

But curb the beast would cast thee in the  
mire,

And leave the hot swamp of voluptuous-  
ness

A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,  
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the  
wheel,

And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence,  
if thou

Look higher, then—perchance—thou  
mayest—beyond

A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
And past the range of Night and Shadow  
—see

The high-heaven dawn of more than  
mortal day

Strike on the Mount of Vision !  
So, farewell.

## THE FLIGHT

### I

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten?  
do not sleep, my sister dear !

How *can* you sleep? the morning brings  
the day I hate and fear ;

The cock has crow'd already once, he  
crows before his time ;

Awake ! the creeping glimmer steals, the  
hills are white with rime.

### II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,  
fold me to your breast !

Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and  
cry myself to rest !

To rest? to rest and wake no more were  
better rest for me,

Than to, waken every morning to that  
face I loathe to see :

### III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so  
calm you lay,

The night was calm, the morn is calm,  
and like another day ;

But I could wish yon moaning sea would  
rise and burst the shore,

And such a whirlwind blow these woods,  
as never blew before.

### IV

For, one by one, the stars went down  
across the gleaming pane,

And project after project rose, and all of  
them were vain ;

The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls  
and leaves the bitter sloe,

The hope I catch at vanishes and youth  
is turn'd to woe.

### V

Come, speak a little comfort ! all night  
I pray'd with tears,

And yet no comfort came to me, and  
now the morn appears,

When he will tear me from your side,  
who bought me for his slave :

This father pays his debt with me, and  
weds me to my grave.

### VI

What father, this or mine, was he, who,  
on that summer day

When I had fall'n from off the crag we  
clamber'd up in play,

Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and  
took and kiss'd me, and again

He kiss'd me ; and I loved him then ;  
he *was* my father then.

### VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a  
tyrant vice !

The Godless Jephtha vows his child . . .  
to one cast of the dice.

These ancient woods, this Hall at last  
will go—perhaps have gone,

Except his own meek daughter yield her  
life, heart, soul to one—

### VIII

To one who knows I scorn him. O the  
formal mocking bow,

The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that  
 masks his malice now—  
 But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of  
 all things ill—  
 It is not Love but Hate that weds a  
 bride against her will ;

## IX

Hate, that would pluck from this true  
 breast the locket that I wear,  
 The precious crystal into which I braided  
 Edwin's hair !  
 The love that keeps this heart alive beats  
 on it night and day—  
 One golden curl, his golden gift, before  
 he past away.

## X

He left us weeping in the woods ; his  
 boat was on the sand ;  
 How slowly down the rocks he went,  
 how loth to quit the land !  
 And all my life was darken'd, as I saw  
 the white sail run,  
 And darken, up that lane of light into  
 the setting sun.

## XI

How often have we watch'd the sun fade  
 from us thro' the West,  
 And follow Edwin to those isles, those  
 islands of the Blest !  
 Is *he* not there ? would I were there, the  
 friend, the bride, the wife,  
 With him, where summer never dies,  
 with Love, the Sun of life !

## XII

O would I were in Edwin's arms—once  
 more—to feel his breath  
 Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship, with  
 Edwin, ev'n in death,  
 Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the  
 death-white sea should rave,  
 Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows  
 of the wave.

## XIII

Shall I take *him* ? I kneel with *him* ? I  
 swear and swear forsworn  
 To love him most, whom most I loathe,  
 to honour whom I scorn ?  
 The Fiend would yell, the grave would  
 yawn, my mother's ghost would  
 rise—  
 To lie, to lie—in God's own house—the  
 blackest of all lies !

## XIV

Why—rather than that hand in mine,  
 tho' every pulse would freeze,  
 I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of  
 some foul disease :  
 Wed him ? I will not wed him, let them  
 spurn me from the doors,  
 And I will wander till I die about the  
 barren moors.

## XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her  
 bridegroom on her bridal night—  
 If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if she  
 were in the right.  
 My father's madness makes me mad—  
 but words are only words !  
 I am not mad, not yet, not quite—There !  
 listen how the birds

## XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding  
 orchard trees !  
 The lark has past from earth to Heaven  
 upon the morning breeze !  
 How gladly, were I one of those, how  
 early would I wake !  
 And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow  
 for *his* sake.

## XVII

They love their mates, to whom they  
 sing ; or else their songs, that meet  
 The morning with such music, would  
 never be so sweet !  
 And tho' these fathers will not hear, the  
 blessed Heavens are just,

And Love is fire, and burns the feet  
would trample it to dust.

## XVIII

A door was open'd in the house—who?  
who? my father sleeps!  
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—some  
one—this way creeps!  
If he? yes, he . . . lurks, listens, fears  
his victim may have fled—  
He! where is some sharp-pointed thing?  
he comes, and finds me dead.

## XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but  
how my temples burn!  
And idle fancies flutter me, I know not  
where to turn;  
Speak to me, sister; counsel me; this  
marriage must not be.  
You only know the love that makes the  
world a world to me!

## XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but  
we were left alone:  
That other left us to ourselves; he cared  
not for his own;  
So all the summer long we roam'd in  
these wild woods of ours,  
My Edwin loved to call us then 'His  
two wild woodland flowers.'

## XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in  
God's free light and air,  
Wild flowers of the secret woods, when  
Edwin found us there,  
Wild woods in which we roved with him,  
and heard his passionate vow,  
Wild woods in which we rove no more,  
if we be parted now!

## XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief to  
wander forth forlorn;

We never changed a bitter word, not  
once since we were born;  
Our dying mother join'd our hands; she  
knew this father well;  
She bad us love, like souls in Heaven,  
and now I fly from Hell,

## XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light  
upon some lonely shore,  
Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes,  
and hear the waters roar,  
And see the ships from out the West go  
dipping thro' the foam,  
And sunshine on that sail at last which  
brings our Edwin home.

## XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace, and  
lights the old church-tower,  
And lights the clock! the hand points  
five—O me—it strikes the hour—  
I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever  
ills betide!  
Arise, my own true sister, come forth!  
the world is wide.

## XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes  
are dim with dew,  
I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder  
by the yew!  
If we should never more return, but  
wander hand in hand  
With breaking hearts, without a friend,  
and in a distant land.

## XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is  
hard, and harsh of mind,  
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those  
that should be kind?  
That matters not: let come what will;  
at last the end is sure,  
And every heart that loves with truth is  
equal to endure.

## TOMORROW

## I

HER, that yer Honour was spakin' to?  
Whin, yer Honour? last year—  
Standin' here be the bridge, when last  
yer Honour was here?

An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the  
mornin', 'Tomorra' says she.

What did they call her, yer Honour?  
They call'd her Molly Magee.

An' yer Honour's the thrue ould blood  
that always manes to be kind,

But there's rason in all things, yer  
Honour, for Molly was out of her  
mind.

## II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night  
comin' down be the sthrame,  
An' it seems to me now like a bit of  
yisther-day in a dhrame—

Here where yer Honour seen her—there  
was but a slip of a moon,

But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid her  
batchelor, Danny O'Roon—

'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the  
crathur' an' Danny says 'Troth,  
an' I been

Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea  
at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>

But I must be lavin' ye soon.<sup>2</sup> 'Ochone  
are ye goin' away?'

'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate' he  
says 'over the say'—

'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an' I  
hard him 'Molly asthore,

I'll meet you agin tomorra,' says he, 'be  
the chapel-door.'

'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'

'O' Monday mornin' says he;

'An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?'

'Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!'

Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour,  
that had no likin' for Dan,

Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to  
come away from the man,

<sup>1</sup> Grog-shop.

An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acress me,  
as light as a lark,

An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'  
thin wint into the dark.

But wirrah! the storm that night—the  
tundher, an' rain that fell,

An' the sthrames runnin' down at the  
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded  
Hell.

## III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an'  
Hiven in its glory smiled,

As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles  
at her sleepin' child—

Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green,  
an' she turn'd herself roun'

Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for  
Danny was not to be foun',

An' many's the time that I watch'd her  
at mass lettin' down the tear,

For the Divil a Danny was there, yer  
Honour, for forty year.

## IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the  
rose an' the white o' the May,

An' yer hair as black as the night, an'  
yer eyes as bright as the day!

Achora, yer laste little whishper was  
sweet as the lilt of a bird!

Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music  
wid ivery word!

An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in  
sich an illigant han',

An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was  
as light as snow an the lan',

An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver  
ye walkt in the shreet,

An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an'  
laid himself undher yer feet,

An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a  
half, me darlin', and he

'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss  
of ye, Molly Magee.

## V

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I  
crack'd his skull for her sake,

An' he ped me back wid the best he  
could give at ould Donovan's  
wake—

For the boys wor about her agin whin  
Dan didn't come to the fore,

An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she  
put thim all to the door.

An', afther, I thried her meself av the  
bird 'ud come to me call,

But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to  
naither at all, at all.

## VI

An' her nabours an' frinds 'ud consowl an'  
condowl wid her, airly and late,

'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst  
over say to the Sassenach whate ;

He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's  
married another wife,

An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of  
the thraithur agin in life !

An' to dhrame of a married man, death  
alive, is a mortial sin.'

But Molly says 'I'd his hand-promise, an'  
shure he'll meet me agin.'

## VII

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory,  
an' both in wan day,

She began to spake to herself, the  
crathur, an' whishper, and say

'Tomorra, Tomorra !' an' Father Mo-  
lowny he tuk her in han',

'Molly, you're manin',' he says, 'me  
dear, av I undherstan',

That ye'll meet your paärints agin an'  
yer Danny O'Roon afore God

Wid his blessed Marthys an' Saints' ;  
an' she gev him a frindly nod,

'Tomorra, Tomorra,' she says, an' she  
didn't intind to desave,

But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was  
as white as the snow an a grave.

## VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor  
diggin' the bog, an' they foun'

Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp  
lyin' undher groun'.

## IX

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me  
wanst, at Katty's shebeen,

'The Divil take all the black lan', for a  
blessin' 'ud come wid the green !'

An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut  
his bit o' turf for the fire ?

But och ! bad scan to the bogs whin  
they swallies the man intire !

An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all  
the light an' the glow,

An' there's hate enough, shure, widout  
*thim* in the Divil's kitchen below.

## X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard  
his Riverence say,

Could keep their haithen kings in the  
flesh for the Jidgemint day,

An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep  
the cat an' the dog,

But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they  
lived be an Irish bog.

## XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they  
foun' an the grass

Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud  
see it that wint in to mass—

But a frish gineration had riz, an' most  
of the ould was few,

An' I didn't know him meself, an' nōne  
of the parish knew.

## XII

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick,  
she was lamed iv a knee,

Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, 'Div ye  
know him, Molly Magee ?'

An' she stood up strait as the Queen of  
the world—she lifted her head—

'He said he would meet me tomorra !'  
an' dhropt down dead an the dead.

## XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye  
would start back agin into life,

Whin we laid yez, aich by aich, at yer  
wake like husban' an' wife.



Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for  
the frinds that was gone !  
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it  
cryin' 'Ochone !'  
An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten  
childer, handsome an' tall,  
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he  
had lost thim all.

## XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in  
wan grave be the dead boor-tree,<sup>1</sup>  
The young man Danny O'Roon wid his  
ould woman, Molly Magee.

## XV

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom  
an' spring from the grass,  
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as ye  
did—over yer Crass !  
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his  
song to the Sun an' the Moon,  
An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly Magee  
an' her Danny O'Roon,  
Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his kays  
an' opens the gate !  
An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther  
nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate  
To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an'  
Saints an' Marthys galore,  
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers' for  
iver an' ivermore.

## XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honour what-  
iver I hard an' seen,  
Yer Honour 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink  
yer health in potheen.

## THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

## I

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess ! fur it mun  
be the time about now  
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end  
close wi' her paäils fro' the cow.

<sup>1</sup> Elder-tree.

Eh ! tha be new to the plaäce—thou'rt  
gaäpin'—doesn't tha see  
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was  
sweet upo' me ?

## II

Naäy to be sewer it be past 'er time.  
What maäkes 'er sa laäte ?  
Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök  
thruf Maddison's gaäte !

## III

Sweet-arts ! Molly belike may 'a lighted  
to-night upo' one.  
Sweet-arts ! thanks to the Lord that I  
niver not listen'd to noän !  
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän  
kettle there o' the hob,  
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the  
second, an' Steevie an' Rob.

## IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou  
sees that i' spite o' the men  
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two  
'oonderd a-year to mysen ;  
Yis ! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony  
lass i' the Shere ;  
An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby  
I seed thruf ya there.

## V

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin, an' I  
beänt not vaäin,  
But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw  
soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,  
An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons, ye  
said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt  
sich a fool as ye thinks ;  
Ye was stroäkin ma down wi' the 'air, as  
I be a-stroäkin o' you,  
But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I wur  
sewer that it couldn't be true ;  
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knew'd it  
wur pleasant to 'ear,  
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but  
my two 'oonderd a-year.

## VI

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was a-  
walkin' together, an' stood  
By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the foälk  
be sa scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,  
Wheer the poor wench drownid hersen,  
black Sal, es 'ed been disgraaced?  
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-  
creeäpin about my waäist;  
An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's  
gittin' ower fond,  
I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot  
fust i' the pond;  
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well,  
as I did that daäy,  
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt  
my feet wi' a flop fro' the claäy.  
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy  
taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam  
an wur niver sa nigh saäyin' Yis.  
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was  
shaämed to cross Gigglesby Greeän,  
Fur a cat may looök at a king thou knows  
but the cat mun be cleän.  
Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o' the  
winders o' Gigglesby Hinn—  
Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they  
pricks cleän thruf to the skin—  
An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken  
shed i' the laäne at the back,  
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an'  
thou runn'd oop o' the thack;  
An' tha squeedg'd my 'and i' the shed,  
fur there we was forced to 'ide,  
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and  
one o' the Tommies beside.

## VII

Theere now, what art'a mewin at, Steevie?  
for owt I can tell—  
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt  
'a liked tha as well.

## VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while  
I wur chaängin' my gown,  
An' I thowt shall I chaänge my staäte?  
but, O Lord, upo' coomin' down—

My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder  
o' flowers i' Maäy—  
Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur  
clatted all ower wi' claäy.  
An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed  
that it couldn't be,  
An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that sattled  
thy coortin o' me.  
An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was  
a-cleänin' the floor,  
That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble  
an' plague wi' indoor.  
But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to  
tha moor na the rest,  
But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I  
knows it be all fur the best.

## IX

Naäy—let ma stroäk tha down till I  
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,  
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd  
not 'a been worth thy milk,  
Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but 'a  
left me the work to do,  
And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es  
all that I 'ears be true;  
But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy,  
an' soa purr awaäy, my dear,  
Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro'  
my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

## X

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used to  
dq twelve year sin'!  
Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur  
at a dog coomin' in,  
An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus  
a-shawin' your claws,  
Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—  
an' one o' ye deäd ye knows!  
Coom gie hoäver then, weant ye? I  
warrant ye soom fine daäy—  
There, lig' down—I shall hev to gie one  
or tother awaäy.  
Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye  
shant hev a drop fro' the päil.  
Steevie be right good manners bang thruf  
to the tip o' the taäil.

## XI

Robby, git down wi'tha, wilt tha? let  
 Steevie coom oop o' my knee.  
 Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been  
 the Steevie fur me!  
 Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur burn  
 an' bred i' the 'ouse,  
 But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver  
 patted a mouse.

## XII

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I 'ed  
 led tha a quieter life  
 Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A  
 faäithful an' loovin' wife!"  
 An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy  
 windmill oop o' the croft,  
 Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha?  
 but that wur a bit ower soft,  
 Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a  
 niced red faäce, an' es cleän  
 Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-  
 new 'eäd o' the Queeän,  
 An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen', fur,  
 Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät  
 That I niver not spied sa much es a  
 poppy along wi' the wheät,  
 An' the wool o' a thistle a-flyin' an'  
 seeädin' tha haäted to see;  
 'Twur es bad es a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> 'ere i' my  
 oän blue chaumber to me.  
 Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I  
 could 'a taäen to tha well,  
 But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a  
 bouncin' boy an' a gell.

## XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I  
 be mysen o' my cats,  
 But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I  
 hevn't naw likin' fur brats;  
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,  
 an' they goäs fur a walk,  
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afor 'em, an'  
 doesn't not 'inder the talk!  
 But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky  
 bibs, an' the clats an' the clouts,

<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces  
 an' maäkin' ma deäf wi' their  
 shouts,  
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they  
 was set upo' springs,  
 An' a haxin' ma haw kard questions, an'  
 saäyin' ondecen things,  
 An' a-callin' ma 'ugly' mayhap to my  
 faäce, or a teärin' my gown—  
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them  
 Tommies—Steevie git down.

## XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you.  
 I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
 Tom, lig there o' the cushion, an' tother  
 Tom 'ere o' the mat.

## XV

Theere! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed I  
 married the Tommies—O Lord,  
 To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I  
 couldn't 'a stuck by my word.  
 To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when  
 Molly 'd put out the light,  
 By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony  
 hour o' the night!  
 An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an' the  
 mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,  
 An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse,  
 an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the  
 chairs!  
 An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let  
 me 'a hed my oän waäy,  
 Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they  
 'evn't a word to saäy.

## XVI

An' I sits i' my oän little parlour, an'  
 sarved by my oän little lass,  
 Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my  
 oän bed o' sparrow-grass,  
 An' my oän door-poorch wi' the wood-  
 bine an' jessmine a-dressin' it  
 greeän,  
 An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a  
 roäbin' the 'ouse like a Queeän.

## XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es  
 I be abroad i' the laänes,  
 When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor es  
 be down wi' their haäches an'  
 their paäins :  
 An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät  
 when it beänt too dear,  
 They maäkes ma a graäter Laädy nor 'er  
 i' the mansion theer,  
 Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much  
 to spare or to spend ;  
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä  
 pleäse God, to the hend.

## XVIII

Mew ! mew !—Bess wi' the milk ! what  
 ha maäde our Molly sa laäte ?  
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theere  
 —it be strikin' height—  
 'Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf' well—I  
 'eärd 'er a maäkin' 'er moän,  
 An' I thowt to mysen 'thank God that I  
 hevn't naw cauf o' my oän.'  
 Theere !

Set it down !

Now Robby !

You Tommies shall waäit to-night  
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap  
 —an' it sarves ye right.

## LOCKSLEY HALL

## SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson ! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,  
 Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,  
 I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless, the divine ;  
 And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past ;  
 Babble, babble ; our old England may go down in babble at last.

'Curse him !' curse your fellow-victim ? call him dotard in your rage ?  
 Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier ! wealthier ? yet perhaps she was not wise ;  
 I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—  
 Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown ;  
 I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake ?  
 You, not you ! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child ;  
 But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,  
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,  
While she vows 'till death shall part us,' she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother—be content,  
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd ! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride ;  
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—  
I this old white-headed dreamer stooped and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.  
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,  
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,  
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,  
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the sligher ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea ;  
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave ;  
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall !

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever ! Ever ? no—for since our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife  
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night ;  
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good ! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just—  
Take the charm 'For ever' from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,' lost within a growing gloom ;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace !

'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they.

Agès after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great ;  
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse :  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller ? which was worse ?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good ;  
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun—  
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen sun.



Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?  
'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,' still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive  
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight, found at morn,  
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?  
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers  
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?  
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,  
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise:  
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,  
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, 'Ye are equals, equal-born.'

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.  
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat,

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom  
Larger than the Lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?  
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,  
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,  
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find  
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;  
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;  
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;  
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all ;  
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices—tell them 'old experience is a fool,'  
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place ;  
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,  
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,  
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,  
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare ;  
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer ;  
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—  
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men ;  
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again ?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken at your lawless din,  
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I ? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—  
Patience ! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep ?  
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep ?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray :  
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May ?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see ?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,  
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all ?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth ;  
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth ?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind :  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind ?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—  
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,  
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,  
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—  
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?  
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this hour,  
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—  
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—  
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. . . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!  
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,  
Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things.  
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendour or in Mars,  
We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,  
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,  
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, 'Would to God that we were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,  
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable man,  
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?  
Well be grateful for the sounding watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song;  
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,  
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,  
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and plots of land—  
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul;  
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.  
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you come so late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd? a shatter'd wheel? a vicious boy!  
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I—  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even? light the glimmer of the dawn?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be  
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson ! Death and Silence hold their own.  
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.  
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and less :  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness !

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,  
Till the peasant cow shall butt the ' Lion passant ' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense !

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled !  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

In this Hostel—I remember—I repent it o'er his grave—  
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks—  
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers—  
Peep't the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell !  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, ' I have loved thee well.'

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side—

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,  
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him ? who shall swear it cannot be ?  
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game :  
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.  
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his doom—  
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.  
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;  
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

## PROLOGUE TO GENERAL HAMLEY

OUR birches yellowing and from each  
The light leaf falling fast,  
While squirrels from our fiery beech  
Were bearing off the mast,  
You came, and look'd and loved the view  
Long-known and loved by me,  
Green Sussex fading into blue  
With one gray glimpse of sea;  
And, gazing from this height alone,  
We spoke of what had been  
Most marvellous in the wars your own  
Crimean eyes had seen;  
And now—like old-world inns that take  
Some warrior for a sign  
That therewithin a guest may make  
True cheer with honest wine—  
Because you heard the lines I read  
Nor utter'd word of blame,  
I dare without your leave to head  
These rhymings with your name,  
Who know you but as one of those  
I fain would meet again,  
Yet know you, as your England knows  
That you and all your men  
Were soldiers to her heart's desire  
When, in the vanish'd year,  
You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,  
And Wolseley overthrew  
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven  
Paled, and the glory grew.

## THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

I

THE charge of the gallant three hundred,  
the Heavy Brigade!  
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands  
of Russians,  
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the  
valley—and stay'd;  
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred  
were riding by  
When the points of the Russian lances  
arose in the sky;  
And he call'd 'Left wheel into line!'  
and they wheel'd and obey'd.  
Then he look'd at the host that had  
halted he knew not why,  
And he turn'd half round, and he bad his  
trumpeter sound  
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as  
he waved his blade  
To the gallant three hundred whose glory  
will never die—  
'Follow,' and up the hill, up the hill, up  
the hill,  
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge,  
and the might of the fight!



Thousands of horsemen had gather'd  
 there on the height,  
 With a wing push'd out to the left and  
 a wing to the right,  
 And who shall escape if they close? but  
 he dash'd up alone  
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,  
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
 Like an Englishman there and then;  
 All in a moment follow'd with force  
 Three that were next in their fiery  
 course,  
 Wedged themselves in between horse  
 and horse,  
 Fought for their lives in the narrow gap  
 they had made—  
 Four amid thousands! and up the hill,  
 up the hill,  
 Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the  
 Heavy Brigade.

## III

Fell like a cannonshot,  
 Burst like a thunderbolt,  
 Crash'd like a hurricane,  
 Broke thro' the mass from below,  
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
 Whirling their sabres in circles of light!  
 And some of us, all in amaze,  
 Who were held for a while from the  
 fight,  
 And were only standing at gaze,  
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
 Folded its wings from the left and the  
 right,  
 And roll'd them around like a cloud,—  
 O mad for the charge and the battle  
 were we,  
 When our own good redcoats sank from  
 sight,  
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray  
 sea,  
 And we turn'd to each other, whispering,  
 all dismay'd,  
 'Lost are the gallant three hundred of  
 Scarlett's Brigade!'

## IV

'Lost one and all' were the words  
 Mutter'd in our dismay;  
 But they rode like Victors and Lords  
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
 They rode, or they stood at bay—  
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
 Down with the bridle-hand drew  
 The foe from the saddle and threw  
 Underfoot there in the fray—  
 Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
 In the wave of a stormy day;  
 Till suddenly shock upon shock  
 Stagger'd the mass from without,  
 Drove it in wild disarray,  
 For our men gallopt up with a cheer and  
 a shout,  
 And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and  
 reel'd  
 Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out  
 of the field,  
 And over the brow and away.

## V

Glory to each and to all, and the charge  
 that they made!  
 Glory to all the three hundred, and all  
 the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy  
 Brigade' who made this famous charge were the  
 Scots Greys and the 2nd squadron of Inniskil-  
 lings; the remainder of the 'Heavy Brigade'  
 subsequently dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp,  
 Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the orderly,  
 who had been close behind him.

## EPILOGUE

IRENE

NOT this way will you set your name  
 A star among the stars.

POET

What way?

## IRENE

You praise when you should blame  
The barbarism of wars.  
A juster epoch has begun.

## POET

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
And that bright hair the modern sun,  
Those eyes the blue to-day,  
You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
I would that wars should cease,  
I would the globe from end to end  
Might sow and reap in peace,  
And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,  
Or Trade re-frain the Powers  
From war with kindly links of gold,  
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
My friends and brother souls,  
With all the peoples, great and small,  
That wheel between the poles.  
But since, our mortal shadow, Ill  
To waste this earth began—  
Perchance from some abuse of Will  
In worlds before the man  
Involving ours—he needs must fight  
To make true peace his own,  
He needs must combat might with might,  
Or Might would rule alone;  
And who loves War for War's own sake  
Is fool, or crazed, or worse;  
But let the patriot-soldier take  
His meed of fame in verse;  
Nay—tho' that realm were in the wrong  
For which her warriors bleed,  
It still were right to crown with song  
The warrior's noble deed—  
A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
For so the deed endures;  
But Song will vanish in the Vast;  
And that large phrase of yours  
'A Star among the stars,' my dear,  
Is girlish talk at best;  
For dare we dally with the sphere  
As he did half in jest,  
Old Horace? 'I will strike' said he  
'The stars with head sublime,'  
But scarce could see, as now we see,  
The man in Space and Time,

So drew perchance a happier lot  
Than ours, who rhyme to-day.  
The fires that arch this dusky dot—  
Yon myriad-worlded way—  
The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
World-isles in lonely skies,  
Whole heavens within themselves, amaze  
Our brief humanities;  
And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,  
Tho' carved in harder stone—  
The falling drop will make his name  
As mortal as my own.

## IRENE

No !

## POET

Let it live then—ay, till when?  
Earth passes, all is lost  
In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
And deed and song alike are swept  
Away, and all in vain  
As far as man can see, except  
The man himself remain;  
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
Too many a voice may cry  
That man can have no after-morn,  
Not yet of these am I.  
The man remains, and whatsoever  
He wrought of good or brave  
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his Art  
Not all in vain may plead  
'The song that nerves a nation's heart,  
Is in itself a deed.'

## TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH  
CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

## I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,

Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's  
pyre ;

## II

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
more than he that sang the Works  
and Days,  
All the chosen coin of fancy  
flashing out from many a golden  
phrase ;

## III.

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,  
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse  
and herd ;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
often flowering in a lonely word ;

## IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
piping underneath his beechen  
bowers ;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
whom the laughing shepherd  
bound with flowers ;

## V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
in the blissful years again to be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
unlaborious earth and oarless sea ;

## VI

Thou that seest Universal  
Nature moved by Universal  
Mind ;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
at the doubtful doom of human  
kind ;

## VII

Light among the vanish'd ages ;  
star that gildest yet this phantom  
shore ;  
Golden branch amid the shadows,  
kings and realms that pass to rise  
no more ;

## VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
fallen every purple Cæsar's  
dome—  
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
sound for ever of Imperial  
Rome—

## IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
and the Rome of freemen holds  
her place,  
I, from out the Northern Island  
sunder'd once from all the human  
race,

## X

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
I that loved thee since my day  
began,  
Wielder of the stateliest measure  
ever moulded by the lips of man.

## THE DEAD PROPHET

182—

## I

DEAD !  
And the Muses cried with a stormy cry  
'Send them no more, for evermore.  
Let the people die.'

## II

Dead !  
'Is it *he* then brought so low ?'  
And a careless people flock'd from the  
fields  
With a purse to pay for the show.

## III

Dead, who had served his time,  
Was one of the people's kings,  
Had labour'd in lifting them out of slime,  
And showing them, souls have wings !

## IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.  
 His friends had stript him bare,  
 And roll'd his nakedness everyway  
 That all the crowd might stare.

## V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
 And a tree with a moulder'd nest  
 On its barkless bones, stood stark by the  
 dead ;  
 And behind him, low in the West,

## VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,  
 And blurr'd in colour and form,  
 The sun hung over the gates of Night,  
 And glared at a coming storm.

## VII

Then glided a vulturous Beldam forth,  
 That on dumb death had thriven ;  
 They call'd her 'Reverence' here upon  
 earth,  
 And 'The Curse of the Prophet' in  
 Heaven.

## VIII

She knelt—'We worship him'—all but  
 wept—  
 'So great so noble was he !'  
 She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept  
 The dust of earth from her knee.

## IX

'Great ! for he spoke and the people  
 heard,  
 And his eloquence caught like a flame  
 From zone to zone of the world, till his  
 Word  
 Had won him a noble name.

## X

'Noble ! he sung, and the sweet sound ran  
 Thro' palace and cottage door,  
 For he touch'd on the whole sad planet  
 of man,  
 The kings and the rich and the poor ;

## XI

'And he sung not alone of an old sun set,  
 But a sun coming up in his youth !  
 Great and noble—O yes—but yet—  
 For man is a lover of Truth,

## XII

'And bound to follow, wherever she go  
 Stark-naked, and up or down,  
 Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless  
 snow,  
 Or the foulest sewer of the town—

## XIII

'Noble and great—O ay—but then,  
 Tho' a prophet should have his due,  
 Was he noblier-fashion'd than other men ?  
 Shall we see to it, I and you ?

## XIV

'For since he would sit on a Prophet's  
 seat,  
 As a lord of the Human soul,  
 We needs must scan him from head to  
 feet  
 Were it but for a wart or a mole ?'

## XV

His wife and his child stood by him in  
 tears,  
 But she—she push'd them aside.  
 'Tho' a name may last for a thousand  
 years,  
 Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

## XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway  
 still,  
 Had often truckled and cower'd  
 When he rose in his wrath, and had  
 yielded her will  
 To the master, as overpower'd,

## XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.  
 'Small blemish upon the skin !  
 But I think we know what is fair without  
 Is often as foul within.'

## XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from part,  
 And out of his body she drew  
 The red 'Blood-eagle'<sup>1</sup> of liver and  
 heart;  
 She held them up to the view;

## XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,  
 And all the people were pleased;  
 'See, what a little heart,' she said,  
 'And the liver is half-diseased!'

## XX

She tore the Prophet after death,  
 And the people paid her well.  
 Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;  
 One shriek'd 'The fires of Hell!'

## EARLY SPRING

## I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And domes the red-plow'd hills  
 With loving blue;  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The throstles too.

## II

Opens a door in Heaven;  
 From skies of glass  
 A Jacob's ladder falls  
 On greening grass,  
 And o'er the mountain-walls  
 Young angels pass.

## III

Before them fleets the shower,  
 And burst the buds,  
 And shine the level lands,  
 And flash the floods;  
 The stars are from their hands  
 Flung thro' the woods,

<sup>1</sup> Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc., when torn by the conqueror out of the body of the conquered.

## IV

The woods with living airs  
 How softly fann'd,  
 Light airs from where the deep,  
 All down the sand,  
 Is breathing in his sleep,  
 Heard by the land.

## V

O follow, leaping blood,  
 The season's lure!  
 O heart, look down and up  
 Serene, secure,  
 Warm as the crocus cup,  
 Like snowdrops, pure!

## VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade  
 Thro' some slight spell,  
 A gleam from yonder vale,  
 Some far blue fell,  
 And sympathies, how frail,  
 In sound and smell!

## VII

Till at thy chuckled note,  
 Thou twinkling bird,  
 The fairy fancies range,  
 And, lightly stirr'd,  
 Ring little bells of change  
 From word to word.

## VIII

For now the Heavenly Power  
 Makes all things new,  
 And thaws the cold, and fills  
 The flower with dew;  
 The blackbirds have their wills,  
 The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY  
BROTHER'S SONNETS

*Midnight, June 30, 1879*

## I

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune  
 The breakers lash the shores:

The cuckoo of a joyless June  
Is calling out of doors :

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own  
To that which looks like rest,  
True brother, only to be known  
By those who love thee best.

## II

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,  
And from the deluged park  
The cuckoo of a worse July  
Is calling thro' the dark :

But thou art silent underground,  
And o'er thee streams the rain,  
True poet, surely to be found  
When Truth is found again.

## III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies  
The summer bird is still,  
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries  
From out a phantom hill ;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun  
Of sixty years away,  
The light of days when life begun,  
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,  
As all my hopes were thine—  
As all thou wert was one with me,  
May all thou art be mine !

## 'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your  
Sirmione row !

So they row'd, and there we landed—'O  
venusta Sirmio !'

There to me thro' all the groves of olive  
in the summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the  
purple flowers grow,

Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's  
hopeless woe,

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-  
hundred years ago,

'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wander'd  
to and fro

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the  
Garda Lake below

Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-  
silvery Sirmio !

HELEN'S TOWER<sup>1</sup>

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land.

Son's love built me, and I hold  
Mother's love in letter'd gold.

Love is in and out of time,

I am mortal stone and lime.

Would my granite girth were strong  
As either love, to last as long !

I should wear my crown entire

To and thro' the Doomsday fire,

And be found of angel eyes

In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRAT-  
FORD DE REDCLIFFE

## IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand among  
our best

And noblest, now thy long day's work  
hath ceased,

Here silent in our Minster of the West

Who wert the voice of England in the  
East.

EPITAPH  
ON GENERAL GORDONIN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and  
tyrant's foe,

Now somewhere dead far in the waste  
Soudan,

Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know

This earth has never borne a nobler  
man.

<sup>1</sup> Written at the request of my friend, Lord  
Dufferin.



EPITAPH ON CAXTON

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

FIAT LUX (his motto)

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light—  
while Time shall last !'  
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,  
But not the shadows which that light  
would cast,  
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.

TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to  
know

The limits of resistance, and the bounds  
Determining concession ; still be bold  
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn ;  
And be thy heart a fortress to maintain  
The day against the moment, and the  
year

Against the day ; thy voice, a music  
heard

Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of  
feud

And faction, and thy will, a power to  
make

This ever-changing world of circumstance,  
In changing, chime with never-changing  
Law.

HANDS ALL ROUND

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn  
night,

Then drink to England, every guest ;  
That man's the best Cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best.

May freedom's oak for ever live  
With stronger life from day to day ;

That man's the true Conservative  
Who lops the moulder'd branch away.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !

To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England, round  
and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long  
To keep our English Empire whole !  
To all our noble sons, the strong  
New England of the Southern Pole !  
To England under Indian skies,  
To those dark millions of her realm !  
To Canada whom we love and prize,  
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great name of England drink,  
my friends,

And all her glorious empire, round and  
round.

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire !  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire !  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state ;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Thro' craven fears of being great.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England, round  
and round.

FREEDOM

I

O THOU so fair in summers gone,  
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul  
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,  
The glittering Capitol ;

II

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,  
But scarce of such majestic mien  
As here with forehead vapour-swathed  
In meadows ever green ;

## III

For thou—when Athens reign'd and  
Rome,  
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with  
pain  
To mark in many a freeman's home  
The slave, the scourge, the chain ;

## IV

O follower of the Vision, still  
In motion to the distant gleam,  
Howe'er blind force and brainless will  
May jar thy golden dream

## V

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,  
Of civic Hate no more to be,  
Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
Till every Soul be free ;

## VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar  
By changes all too fierce and fast  
This order of Her Human Star,  
This heritage of the past ;

## VII

O scorner of the party cry  
That wanders from the public good,  
Thou—when the nations rear on high  
Their idol smear'd with blood,

## VIII

And when they roll their idol down—  
Of saner worship sanely proud ;  
Thou loather of the lawless crown  
As of the lawless crowd ;

## IX

How long thine ever-growing mind  
Hath still'd the blast and strown the  
wave,  
Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
To sing thee to thy grave,

## X

Men loud against all forms of power—  
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
tongues—  
Expecting all things in an hour—  
Brass mouths and iron lungs !

TO H.R.H. PRINCESS  
BEATRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of human  
life,  
Which else with all its pains, and griefs,  
and deaths,  
Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of  
dawn  
That brightens thro' the Mother's tender  
eyes,  
And warms the child's awakening world  
—and one  
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
Which from her household orbit draws  
the child  
To move in other spheres. The Mother  
weeps  
At that white funeral of the single life,  
Her maiden daughter's marriage ; and  
her tears  
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the  
child  
Is happy—ev'n in leaving *her* ! but Thou,  
True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial  
eyes  
Have seen the loneliness of earthly thrones,  
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown  
nor let  
This later light of Love have risen in vain,  
But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
between  
The two that love thee, lead a summer  
life,  
Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to  
each Love,  
Like some conjectured planet in mid  
heaven  
Between two Suns, and drawing down  
from both  
The light and genial warmth of double day.

THE FLEET<sup>1</sup>

I

You, you, *if* you shall fail to under-stand

What England is, and what her all-in-all,

On you will come the curse of all the land,

Should this old England fall  
Which Nelson left so great.

<sup>1</sup> The speaker said that 'he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, also, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling stations. This was as essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realised how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy? Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to.'—*Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November 1886.*

T

II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power on earth,

Our own fair isle, the lord of every sea—  
Her fuller franchise—what would that be worth—

Her ancient fame of Free—

Were she . . . a fallen state?

III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so small,

Her island-myriads fed from alien lands—

The fleet of England is her all-in-all;

Her fleet is in your hands,  
And in her fleet her Fate.

IV

You, you, that have the ordering of her fleet,

*If* you should only compass her disgrace,

When all men starve, the wild mob's million feet

Will kick you from your place,

But then too late, too late.

## OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBI- TION BY THE QUEEN

*Written at the Request of the Prince  
of Wales*

I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!

In your welfare we rejoice,  
Sons and brothers that have sent,  
From isle and cape and continent,  
Produce of your field and flood,  
Mount and mine, and primal wood;  
Works of subtle brain and hand,  
And splendours of the morning land,  
Gifts from every British zone;

Britons, hold your own!

2 P

## II

May we find, as ages run,  
 The mother featured in the son ;  
 And may yours for ever be  
 That old strength and constancy  
 Which has made your fathers great  
 In our ancient island State,  
 And wherever her flag fly,  
 Glorying between sea and sky,  
 Makes the might of Britain known ;  
 Britons, hold your own !

## III

Britain fought her sons of yore—  
 Britain fail'd ; and never more,  
 Careless of our growing kin,  
 Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
 Men that in a narrower day—  
 Unprophetic rulers they—  
 Drove from out the mother's nest  
 That young eagle of the West  
 To forage for herself alone ;  
 Britons, hold your own !

## IV

Sharers of our glorious past,  
 Brothers, must we part at last ?  
 Shall we not thro' good and ill  
 Cleave to one another still ?  
 Britain's myriad voices call,  
 ' Sons, be welded each and all,  
 Into one imperial whole,  
 One with Britain, heart and soul !  
 One life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne !'  
 Britons, hold your own !

## POETS AND THEIR BIBLIO- GRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,  
 Old Virgil who would write ten lines,  
 they say,  
 At dawn, and lavish all the golden  
 day  
 To make them wealthier in his readers'  
 eyes ;

And you, old popular Horace, you the  
 wise  
 Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay,  
 And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter  
 bay,  
 Catullus, whose dead songster never dies ;  
 If, glancing downward on the kindly  
 sphere  
 That once had roll'd you round and  
 round the Sun,  
 You see your Art still shrined in  
 human shelves,  
 You should be jubilant that you flourish'd  
 here  
 Before the Love of Letters, overdone,  
 Had swampt the sacred poets with  
 themselves.

## TO W. C. MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we  
 part ;  
 Full-handed thunders often have  
 confessed  
 Thy power, well-used to move the  
 public breast.  
 We thank thee with our voice, and from  
 the heart.  
 Farewell, Macready, since this night we  
 part,  
 Go, take thine honours home ; rank  
 with the best,  
 Garrick and statelier Kemble, and  
 the rest  
 Who made a nation purer through their  
 art.  
 Thine is it that our drama did not die,  
 Nor flicker down to brainless panto-  
 mime,  
 And those gilt gauds men-children  
 swarm to see.  
 Farewell, Macready ; moral, grave,  
 sublime ;  
 Our Shakespeare's bland and universal  
 eye  
 Dwells pleased, through twice a  
 hundred years, 'on thee.

# DEMETER

## AND OTHER POEMS

### TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

#### I

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and rash ;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

#### II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one, that ruling has increased  
Her greatness and her self-content.

#### III

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of ' Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

#### IV

But since your name will grow with Time,  
Not all, as honouring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the name  
A golden portal to my rhyme :

#### V

But more, that you and yours may know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe.

#### VI

For he—your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you—  
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State,—

#### VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening year,

Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

#### VIII

Who might have chased and clasp  
Renown  
And caught her chaplet here—and there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering down ;

#### IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, ' Unspeakable ' he wrote  
' Their kindness,' and he wrote no more ;

#### X

And sacred is the latest word ;  
And now the Was, the Might-have-  
been,  
And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

#### XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When That within the coffin fell,  
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

#### XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars. To question, why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

#### XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours.

# ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

## I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the sceptre.

## II

She beloved for a kindliness  
Rare in Fable or History,  
Queen, and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem  
Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

## III

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and Queenly.

## IV

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee.

## V

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queen-  
hood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest !

## VI

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call your poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,

Make their neighbourhood health-  
fuller,  
Give your gold to the Hospital,  
Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this glad Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty sum-  
mers,  
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

## VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for Eternity,  
Raise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,  
Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-  
merce !  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science !  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire !

## X

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing ' Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee !'

## XI

Are there thunders moaning in the dis-  
tance ?



Are there spectres moving in the darkness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,  
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

# TO PROFESSOR JEBB

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are slow to fade away,  
Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>  
From out the Ghost of Pindar in you  
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say<sup>2</sup>  
That here the torpid mummy wheat  
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet  
As that which gilds the glebe of England,  
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.  
So may this legend for awhile,  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

# DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

## (IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies  
All night across the darkness, and at dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,  
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

With passing thro' at once from state to state,  
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,  
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,  
Might break thro' clouded memories once again  
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale  
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song  
And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,  
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,  
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away  
That shadow of a likeness to the king  
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!  
Queen of the dead no more—my child!  
Thine eyes  
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun  
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,  
And robed thee in his day from head to feet—  
'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes  
Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes  
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power  
Draw downward into Hades with his drift  
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below  
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;  
But when before have Gods or men beheld  
The Life that had descended re-arise,  
And lighted from above him by the Sun?  
So mighty was the mother's childless cry,  
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,  
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze  
With flowers that brighten as thy foot-step falls,

All flowers—but for one black blur of  
 earth  
 Left by that closing chasin, thro' which  
 the car  
 Of dark Aidoneus rising rapt thee  
 hence.  
 And here, my child, tho' folded in thine  
 arms,  
 I feel the deathless heart of motherhood  
 Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe  
 Should yawn once more into the gulf,  
 and thence  
 The shrilly whinnings of the team of  
 Hell,  
 Ascending, pierce the glad and songful  
 air,  
 And all at once their arch'd necks, mid-  
 night-maned,  
 Jet upward thro' the mid-day blossom.  
 No !  
 For, see, thy foot has touch'd it ; all the  
 space  
 Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself  
 afresh,  
 And breaks into the crocus-purple hour  
 That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,  
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,  
 Yea, the cubb'd lioness ; went in search  
 of thee  
 Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and  
 gave  
 Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,  
 And set the mother waking in amaze  
 To find her sick one whole ; and forth  
 again  
 Among the wail of midnight winds, and  
 cried,  
 'Where is my loved one ? Wherefore  
 do ye wail ?'  
 And out from all the night an answer  
 shrill'd,  
 'We know not, and we know not why we  
 wail.'  
 I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,  
 And ask'd the waves that moan about  
 the world  
 'Where ? do ye make your moaning for  
 my child ?'

And round from all the world the voices  
 came  
 'We know not, and we know not why  
 we moan.'  
 'Where' ? and I stared from every eagle-  
 peak,  
 I thridded the black heart of all the  
 woods,  
 I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the  
 storms  
 Of Autumn swept across the city, and  
 heard  
 The murmur of their temples chanting  
 me,  
 Me, me, the desolate Mother ! 'Where' ?  
 —and turn'd,  
 And fled by many a waste, forlorn of  
 man,  
 And grieved for man thro' all my grief  
 for thee,—  
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,  
 The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,  
 The scorpion crawling over naked  
 skulls ;—  
 I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
 Spring from his fallen God, but trace of  
 thee  
 I saw not ; and far on, and, following out  
 A league of labyrinthine darkness, came  
 On three gray heads beneath a gleaming  
 rift.  
 'Where' ? and I heard one voice from  
 all the three  
 'We know not, for we spin the lives of  
 men,  
 And not of Gods, and know not why we  
 spin !  
 There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing  
 knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,  
 Without his knowledge, from him flits to  
 warn  
 A far-off friendship that he comes no  
 more,  
 So he, the God of dreams, who heard  
 my cry,  
 Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself  
 Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow  
 past

Before me, crying 'The Bright one in  
the highest  
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,  
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I,  
the child  
Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,  
the Power  
That lifts her buried life from gloom to  
bloom,  
Should be for ever and for evermore  
The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.  
Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods  
of Heaven.

I would not mingle with their feasts; to

III

Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the  
lips,

Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.

The man, that only lives and loves an  
hour,

Seem'd nobler than their hard Eternities.  
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my  
ravings hush'd

The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd  
To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine  
And golden grain, my gift to helpless  
man.

Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-  
spears

Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and  
the sun,

Pale at my grief, drew down before his  
time

Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter  
snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness,  
He

Who still is highest, glancing from his  
highest

On earth a fruitless fallow, when he  
miss'd

The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise  
And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
should'st dwell

For nine white moons of each whole year  
with me,

Three dark ones in the shadow with thy  
King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam of  
dawn

Will see me by the landmark far away,  
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk  
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-  
content

With them, who still are highest. Those  
gray heads,

What meant they by their 'Fate beyond  
the Fates'

But younger kindlier Gods to bear us  
down,

As we bore down the Gods before us?  
Gods,

To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to  
stay,

Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods  
indeed,

To send the noon into the night and  
break

The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?  
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,  
And all the Shadow die into the Light,  
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright  
year with me,

And souls of men, who grew beyond  
their race,

And made themselves as Gods against  
the fear

Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast  
from men,

As Queen of Death, that worship which  
is Fear,

Henceforth, as having risen from out the  
dead,

Shalt ever send thy life along with mine  
From buried grain thro' springing blade,  
and bless

Their garner'd Autumn also, reap with me,  
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of  
Earth

The worship which is Love, and see no  
more

The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-  
glimmering lawns

Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide  
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD ROÄ<sup>1</sup>

NAÄY, noä mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin'  
'im Roä, Roä, Roä,  
Fur the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind, 'e  
can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge  
as 'appy as iver I can,  
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver  
owäd mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby,  
afoor thou was gotten too owd,  
Fur 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was  
allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e  
fowt; 'e could howd<sup>3</sup> 'is oan,  
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when  
an' wheree to bury his boane.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an'  
'e'd niver not down wi' 'is taäil,  
Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shaämed  
on, when we was i' Howlaby  
Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived,  
that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be  
deäd,

I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort  
of a sarvice read.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parlia-  
ment man 'at stans fur us 'ere,  
An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oan sen, if 'e  
could but stan fur the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True'—them words be i'  
Scriptur—an' Faäithful an' True  
Ull be fun'<sup>4</sup> upo' four short legs ten times  
fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but I  
knaws they runs upo' four,<sup>5</sup>—  
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs  
it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we  
lived i' Howlaby Daäle,  
Ten year sin—Naäy—naäy! tha mun  
nobbut hev' one glass of aäle.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd<sup>1</sup> the 'ouse, an'  
belt<sup>2</sup> long afoor my daäy  
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>3</sup>  
an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud  
coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' saddle their ends upo' stools to pictur  
the door-poorch theree,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin'  
theree o' the brokken stick;<sup>4</sup>  
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'<sup>5</sup> as  
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' theree i' the 'ouse one night—but it's  
down, an' all on it now  
Goan into mangles an' tonups,<sup>6</sup> an'  
raäved slick thruf by the plow—

Theree, when the 'ouse wur a house, one  
night I wur sittin' aloän,  
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeat, an' sleeäpin  
still as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowd as  
this, an' the midders<sup>7</sup> as white,  
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop  
wi' the windle<sup>8</sup> that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside  
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,  
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—  
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi' the  
caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their  
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,  
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was  
nobbut three, an' noän on 'em  
theree.

<sup>1</sup> 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned. <sup>2</sup> Built.

<sup>3</sup> 'Twizzen'd,' twisted. <sup>4</sup> On a staff *ragulé*.

<sup>5</sup> Ivy. <sup>6</sup> Mangolds and turnips.

<sup>7</sup> Meadows. <sup>8</sup> Drifted snow.

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover. <sup>2</sup> Manner. <sup>3</sup> Hold.

<sup>4</sup> Found. <sup>5</sup> 'Ou' as in 'house.'

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst  
an' dussn't not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,  
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins<sup>1</sup> was  
nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst<sup>2</sup> at the night,  
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,  
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like  
a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw  
slushin' down fro' the bank to  
the beck,

An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I  
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'  
the good owd times 'at was goan,  
An' the munney they maäde by the war,  
an' the times 'at was coomin' on ;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin'  
to let in furriners' wheät,  
Howiver was British farmers to stan'  
ageän o' their feeät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'  
to paäy my men ?  
An' all along o' the feller<sup>3</sup> as turn'd 'is  
back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we  
couldn't ha' 'eärd tha call,  
Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha  
down, an' thy craädle an' all ;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha  
then 'ed gotten wer leäve,  
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause  
o' the Christmas Eäve ;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when  
Moother 'ed gotten to bed,  
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the  
Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my 'ead,

Till I dream'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I  
says to him 'Squire, ya're laäte,'  
Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as the  
Yule-block theer i' the graäte.

An' 'e says 'can ya paäy mē the rent to-  
night ?' an' I says to 'im 'Noä,'  
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,<sup>1</sup>  
'Then hout to-night tha shall goä.'

'Tha'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin ma  
hout upo' Christmas Eäve ?'  
Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver  
a-tuggin' an' teärin' my slieäve.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wud,<sup>2</sup> fur  
I noäwaäys know'd 'is intent ;  
An' I says 'Git awaäy, ya beäst,' an' I  
fetcht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd  
'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,  
An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy  
chaumber door wouldn't sneck ;<sup>3</sup>

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my hairm  
hingin' down to the floor,  
An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an'  
teärin' me wuss nor afor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I  
kick'd thy Moother istead.  
'What arta snorin' theree fur ? the house  
is afire,' she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about  
the gell o' the farm,  
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when  
there warn't not a mossel o' harm ;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur  
gawin' that waäy to the bad,  
Fur the gell<sup>4</sup> was as howry a trollope  
as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I  
offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,  
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she  
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says 'I'd be good to tha, Bess, if  
tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,'

<sup>1</sup> Arm.      <sup>2</sup> Mad.      <sup>3</sup> Latch.

<sup>4</sup> The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged  
in the mud, but there is a sense of slatternliness  
in 'traäpes'd' which is not expressed in 'trudged.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Moästlins,' for the most part, generally.

<sup>3</sup> Once.

<sup>3</sup> Peel.

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair,  
an' screeäð like a Howl gone  
wud<sup>1</sup>—

'Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>2</sup> Git oop,  
if ya're onywaäys good for owt.'  
And I says 'If I beänt noäwaäys—not  
nowadaäys—good fur nowt—

Yit I beänt sich a Nowt<sup>3</sup> of all Nowts  
as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then I  
seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld 'Ya mun saäve little Dick,  
an' be sharp about it an' all,'  
Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'  
sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder  
hin, when I gits to the top,  
But the heät druv hout i' my heyes till I  
feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an'  
tellin' me not to be skeärd,  
An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leäst-  
waäys as I wasn't afeärd;

But I couldn't see fur the smoäke wheree  
thou was a-liggin, my lad,  
An' Roäver was theree i' the chaumber  
a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-  
squeälin', as if tha was bit,  
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the  
merk's<sup>4</sup> o' thy shou'der yit;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw  
I didn't haäfe think as 'e'd 'ear,  
*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn*  
*i' 'is mouth to the winder theree!*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as  
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,  
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptur 'at  
summun seed i' the flaäme,

<sup>1</sup> She half overturned me and shrieked like an  
owl gone mad.

<sup>2</sup> Ladder.

<sup>3</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless  
person.

<sup>4</sup> Mark.

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an'  
'e promised a son to she,  
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i'  
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says 'I mun  
gaw up ageän fur Roä.'

'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I  
tell'd 'er 'Yeäs I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder,  
an' clemm'd<sup>1</sup> owd Roä by the 'eäð,  
An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I  
taäked 'im at fust fur deäð;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an'  
seeäm'd as blind as a poop,  
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>2</sup> I  
couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the  
barn, fur the barn wouldn't burn  
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy,  
an' the wind wasn't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled  
'is taäil fur a bit,  
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin'  
all night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and  
thou was a-squeälin' thysen,  
An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin' an'  
moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>3</sup>  
rummle down when the roof gev  
waäy,

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an'  
roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the barn  
was as cowl as owt,

An' we cuddled and huddled together, an'  
happt<sup>4</sup> wersens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed  
beän sa soäk'd wi' the thaw  
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl that  
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

<sup>1</sup> Clutched.

<sup>2</sup> 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

<sup>3</sup> Beams.

<sup>4</sup> Wrapt ourselves.



Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the  
 ' rigtree<sup>1</sup> was tummlin' in—  
 Too laäte—but it's all ower now—hall  
 hower—an' ten yéar sin ;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but  
 I'll coom an' I'll squench the light,  
 Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires—and  
 soa little Dick, good-night.

<sup>1</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of the  
 house just beneath the ridge.

## VASTNESS

## I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe  
 sighs after many a vanish'd face,  
 Many a planet by many a sun may roll  
 with the dust of a vanish'd race.

## II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this  
 poor earth's pale history runs,—  
 What is it all but a trouble of ants in the  
 gleam of a million million of suns ?

## III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side,  
 truthless violence mourn'd by the  
 Wise,  
 Thousands of voices drowning his own in  
 a popular torrent of lies upon lies ;

## IV

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious  
 annals of army and fleet,  
 Death for the right cause, death for the  
 wrong cause, trumpets of victory,  
 groans of defeat ;

## V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk,  
 and Charity setting the martyr  
 aflame ;  
 Thralldom who walks with the banner of  
 Freedom, and recks not to ruin a  
 realm in her name.

## VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the  
 gloom of doubts that darken the  
 schools ;  
 Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her  
 hand, follow'd up by her vassal  
 legion of fools ;

## VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with  
 her spice and her vintage, her silk  
 and her corn ;  
 Desolate offing, sailorless harbours,  
 famishing populace, wharves for-  
 lorn ;

## VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise ;  
 gloom of the evening, Life at a  
 close ;  
 Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-  
 way with her flying robe and her  
 poison'd rose ;

## IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of  
 Pleasure, a worm which writhes  
 all day, and at night  
 Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper,  
 and stings him back to the curse  
 of the light ;

## X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded  
 harlots ; honest Poverty, bare to  
 the bone ;  
 Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty ;  
 Flattery gilding the rift in a  
 throne ;

## XI

Fame blowing out from her golden  
 trumpet a jubilant challenge to  
 Time and to Fate ;  
 Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on  
 all the laurel'd graves of the Great ;

## XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with  
marriage, no regrets for aught  
that has been,

Household happiness, gracious children,  
debtless competence, golden mean;

## XIII

National hatreds of whole generations,  
and pigmy spite of the village  
spire;

Vows that will last to the last death-  
ruckle, and vows that are snapt  
in a moment of fire;

## XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the  
minute, and died in the doing it,  
flesh without mind;

He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross,  
till Self died out in the love of  
his kind;

## XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and  
Winter, and all these old revolu-  
tions of earth;

All new-old revolutions of Empire—  
change of the tide—what is all of  
it worth?

## XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences,  
poesy, varying voices of prayer?

All that is noblest, all that is basest, all  
that is filthy with all that is fair?

## XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in  
being our own corpse-coffins at  
last,

Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,  
drown'd in the deeps of a mean-  
ingless Past?

## XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the  
gloom, or a moment's anger of  
bees in their hive?—

\* \* \* \*

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and  
love him for ever: the dead are  
not dead but alive.

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell  
Lowell

## THE RING

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

*Miriam (singing)*

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Gloving Honey Moons  
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night.  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,  
For ten thousand years  
Old and new?

*Father.* And who was he with such  
love-drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons of  
one?

*Miriam.* The prophet of his own, my  
Hubert—his  
The words, and mine the setting. 'Air  
and Words,'  
Said Hubert, when I sang the song, 'are  
bride  
And bridegroom.' Does it please you?

*Father.* Mainly, child,  
Because I hear your Mother's voice in  
yours,  
She—, why, you shiver tho' the wind  
is west

With all the warmth of summer.

*Miriam.* Well, I felt  
On a sudden I know not what, a breath  
that past  
With all the cold of winter.

*Father (muttering to himself).* Even  
so.

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once  
was Man,

But cannot wholly free itself from Man,  
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the  
veil

Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.  
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for  
man,

But thro' the Will of One who knows  
and rules—

And utter knowledge is but utter love—  
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
Thro' all the Spheres—an ever opening  
height,

An ever lessening earth—and she perhaps,  
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link  
With me to-day.

*Miriam.* You speak so low, what is it?  
Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a new  
link

Breaking an old one?

*Father.* No, for we, my child,  
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.

*Miriam.* And you the lifelong guard-  
ian of the child.

*Father.* I, and one other whom you  
have not known.

*Miriam.* And who? what other?

*Father.* Whither are you bound?  
For Naples which we only left in May?

*Miriam.* No! father, Spain, but  
Hubert brings me home

With April and the swallow. Wish me  
joy!

*Father.* What need to wish when  
Hubert weds in you

The heart of Love, and you the soul of  
Truth

In Hubert?

*Miriam.* Tho' you used to call me  
once

The lonely maiden-Princess of the wood,  
Who meant to sleep her hundred sum-  
mers out

Before a kiss should wake her.

*Father.* Ay, but now  
Your fairy Prince has found you, take  
this ring.

*Miriam.* 'Io t' amo'—and these dia-  
monds—beautiful!

'From Walter,' and for me from you then?

*Father.* Well,  
One way for Miriam.

*Miriam.* Miriam am I not?

*Father.* This ring bequeath'd you by  
your mother, child,

Was to be given you—such her dying  
wish—

Given on the morning when you came of  
age

Or on the day you married. Both the  
days

Now close in one. The ring is doubly  
yours.

Why do you look so gravely at the tower?

*Miriam.* I never saw it yet so all  
ablaze

With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below!

And how the birds that circle round the  
tower

Are cheeping to each other of their flight  
To summer lands!

*Father.* And that has made you grave?  
Fly—care not. Birds and brides must  
leave the nest.

Child, I am happier in your happiness  
Than in mine own.

*Miriam.* It is not that!

*Father.* What else?

*Miriam.* That chamber in the tower.

*Father.* What chamber, child?  
Your nurse is here?

*Miriam.* My Mother's nurse and mine.  
She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

*Father.* What did she say?

*Miriam.* She said, that you and I  
Had been abroad for my poor health so  
long

She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I  
ask'd

About my Mother, and she said, 'Thy  
hair

Is golden like thy Mother's, not so fine.'

*Father.* What then? what more?

*Miriam.* She said—perhaps indeed  
She wander'd, having wander'd now so  
far

Beyond the common date of death—that  
you,

When I was smaller than the statuette  
Of my dear Mother on your bracket here—

You took me to that chamber in the tower,  
The topmost—a chest there, by which

you knelt—

And there were books and dresses—left  
to me,

A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she  
said,

I babbled, Mother, Mother—as I used  
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd my  
hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came  
And caught me from my nurse. I hear  
her yet—

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

*Father.* Garrulous old crone.

*Miriam.* Poor nurse!

*Father.* I bad her keep,  
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the  
ring,

For I myself would tell you all to-day.

*Miriam.* 'She too might speak to-  
day,' she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your book,  
But you will turn the pages.

*Father.* Ay, to-day!  
I brought you to that chamber on your  
third

September birthday with your nurse, and  
felt

An icy breath play on me, while I stooped  
To take and kiss the ring.

*Miriam.* This very ring  
Is t' amo?

*Father.* Yes, for some wild hope  
was mine

That, in the misery of my married life,  
Miriam your Mother might appear to me.  
She came to you, not me. The storm,  
you hear

Far-off, is Muriel—your stepmother's  
voice.

*Miriam.* Vext, that you thought my  
Mother came to me?

Or at my crying 'Mother'? or to find  
My Mother's diamonds hidden from her  
there,

Like worldly beauties in the Cell, not  
shown

To dazzle all that see them?

*Father.* Wait a while.

Your Mother and stepmother—Miriam  
Erne

And Muriel Erne—the two were cousins  
—lived

With Muriel's mother on the down, that  
sees

A thousand squares of corn and meadow,  
far

As the gray deep, a landscape which  
your eyes

Have many a time ranged over when a  
babe.

*Miriam.* I climb'd the hill with  
Hubert yesterday,

And from the thousand squares, one  
silent voice

Came on the wind, and seem'd to say  
'Again.'

We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

*Father.* And there

I found these cousins often by the brook,  
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw  
the fly;

The girls of equal age, but one was fair,  
And one was dark, and both were beauti-  
ful.

No voice for either spoke within my heart  
Then, for the surface eye, that only doats

On outward beauty, glancing from the one  
To the other, knew not that which

pleased it most,  
The raven ringlet or the gold; but both

Were dowerless, and myself, I used to walk

This Terrace—morbid, melancholy; mine  
And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the  
field;

For all that ample woodland whisper'd  
'debt,'

The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-  
mur'd 'debt,'

And in yon arching avenue of old elms,  
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober  
rook

And carrion crow cry 'Mortgage.'

*Miriam.* Father's fault  
Visited on the children!

*Father.* Ay, but then  
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
Rome—

He left me wealth—and while I journey'd  
hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a dream,  
And while I communed with my truest  
self,

I woke to all of truest in myself,  
Till, in the gleam of those mid-summer  
dawns,

The form of Muriel faded, and the face  
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;  
And past and future mix'd in Heaven  
and made

The rosy twilight of a perfect day.'

*Miriam.* So glad? no tear for him,  
who left you wealth,  
Your kinsman?

*Father.* I had seen the man but once;  
He loved my name not me; and then I  
pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,  
So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
That he was nearing his own hundred,  
sold

This ring to me, then laugh'd 'the ring  
is weird.'

And weird and worn and wizard-like was  
he.

'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he said  
'The souls

Of two repentant Lovers guard the ring';  
Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak  
eyes—

'And if you give the ring to any maid,  
They still remember what it cost them  
here,

And bind the maid to love you by the  
ring;

And if the ring were stolen from the  
maid,

The theft were death or madness to the  
thief,

So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold the  
gift.'

And then he told their legend:

'Long ago  
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale  
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting  
sent

This ring "Io t' amo" to his best beloved,  
And sent it on her birthday. She in  
wrath

Return'd it on her birthday, and that day  
His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the  
ring,

He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
The causer of that scandal, fought and  
fell;

And she that came to part them all too  
late,

And found a corpse and silence, drew the  
ring

From his dead finger, wore it till her  
death,

Shrined him within the temple of her  
heart,

Made every moment of her after life  
A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and  
cried

"I see him, Io t' amo, Io t' amo."

*Miriam.* Legend or true? so tender  
should be true!

Did he believe it? did you ask him?

*Father.* Ay!  
But that half skeleton, like a barren  
ghost

From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
laugh'd:

A hollow laughter!

*Miriam.* Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death! But  
you?

*Father.* Well, as the bygone lover  
 thro' this ring  
 Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
 Would call thro' this 'Io t' amo' to the  
 heart  
 Of Miriam; then I bad the man en-  
 grave  
 'From Walter' on the ring, and send it  
 —wrote  
 Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but  
 he—  
 Some younger hand must have engraven  
 the ring—  
 His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost  
 Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
 scrawl'd  
 A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel';  
 And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I  
 meant  
 For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted it  
 Before that other whom I loved and love.  
 A mountain stay'd me here, a minster  
 there,  
 A galleried palace, or a battlefield,  
 Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but—  
 coming home—  
 And on your Mother's birthday—all but  
 yours—  
 A week betwixt—and when the tower as  
 now  
 Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,  
 And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
 Head-foremost—who were those that  
 stood between  
 The tower and that rich phantom of the  
 tower?  
 Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and  
 like  
 May-blossoms in mid autumn—was it  
 they?  
 A light shot upward on them from the  
 lake.  
 What sparkled there? whose hand was  
 that? they stood  
 So close together. I am not keen of  
 sight,  
 But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—  
 'O Miriam! have you given your ring to  
 her?

O Miriam! Miriam reddened, Muriel  
 clench'd  
 The hand that wore it, till I cried again:  
 'O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!'  
 She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was  
 mute.  
 'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'  
 Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—  
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way  
 And saying gently: 'Muriel, by your  
 leave,'  
 Unclosed the hand, and from it drew the  
 ring,  
 And gave it me, who pass'd it down her  
 own,  
 'Io t' amo, all is well then.' Muriel fled.  
*Miriam.* Poor Muriel!  
*Father.* Ay, poor Muriel  
 when you hear  
 What follows! Miriam loved me from  
 the first,  
 Not thro' the ring; but on her marriage-  
 morn  
 This birthday, death-day, and betrothal  
 ring,  
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone;  
 And after hours of search and doubt and  
 threats,  
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,  
 'See!—  
 Found in a chink of that old moulder'd  
 floor!'  
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,  
 As who should say 'that those who lose  
 can find.'  
 Then I and she were married for a  
 year,  
 One year without a storm, or even a  
 cloud;  
 And you my Miriam born within the  
 year;  
 And she my Miriam dead within the  
 year.  
 I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:  
 'The books, the miniature, the lace are  
 hers,  
 My ring too when she comes of age, or  
 when  
 She marries; you—you loved me, kept  
 your word.



You love me still "Io t' amo."—Muriel  
 —no—  
 She cannot love; she loves her own  
 hard self,  
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Pro-  
 mise me,  
 Miriam not Muriel—she shall have the  
 ring.  
 And 'there the light of other life, which  
 lives  
 Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,  
 Gleam'd for a moment in her own on  
 earth.  
 I swore the vow, then with my latest  
 kiss  
 Upon them, closed her eyes, which would  
 not close,  
 But kept their watch upon the ring and  
 you.  
 Your birthday was her death-day.  
*Miriam.* O poor Mother!  
 And you, poor desolate Father, and  
 poor me,  
 The little senseless, worthless, wordless  
 babe,  
 Saved when your life was wreck'd!  
*Father.* Desolate? yes!  
 Desolate as that sailor, whom the storm  
 Had parted from his comrade in the  
 boat,  
 And dash'd half dead on barren sands,  
 was I.  
 Nay, you were my one solace; only—  
 you  
 Were always ailing. Muriel's mother  
 sent,  
 And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came  
 And saw you, shook her head, and patted  
 yours,  
 And smiled, and making with a kindly  
 pinch  
 Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose—  
 'That should be fix'd,' she said; 'your  
 pretty bud,  
 So blighted here, would flower into full  
 health  
 Among our heath and bracken. Let her  
 come!  
 And we will feed her with our mountain  
 air,

And send her home to you rejoicing.'  
 No—  
 We could not part. And once, when  
 you my girl  
 Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny fist  
 Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's  
 grave—  
 By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,' she  
 said,  
 'Among the tombs in this damp vale of  
 yours!  
 You scorn my Mother's warning, but the  
 child  
 Is paler than before. We often walk  
 In open sun, and see beneath our feet  
 The mist of autumn gather from your  
 lake,  
 And shroud the tower; and once we  
 only saw  
 Your gilded vane, a light above the  
 mist'—  
 (Our old bright bird that still is veering  
 there  
 Above his four gold letters) 'and the  
 light,'  
 She said, 'was like that light'—and there  
 she paused,  
 And long; till I believing that the girl's  
 Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find  
 One likeness, laugh'd a little and found  
 her two—  
 'A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
 war'—  
 'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,  
 The pyre he burnt in.'—'Nay,' she said,  
 'the light  
 That glimmers on the marsh and on the  
 grave.'  
 And spoke no more, but turn'd and  
 pass'd away.  
 Miriam, I am not surely one of those  
 Caught by the flower that closes on the  
 fly,  
 But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,  
 In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
 To strike it, struck; I took, I left you  
 there;  
 I came, I went, was happier day by day;  
 For Muriel nursed you with a mother's  
 care;

Till on that clear and heather-scented  
height

The rounder cheek had brighten'd into  
bloom.

She always came to meet me carrying  
you,

And all her talk was of the babe she  
loved ;

So, following her old pastime of the brook,  
She threw the fly for me ; but oftener left  
That angling to the mother. ' Muriel's  
health

Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.  
Strange !

She used to shun the wailing babe, and  
doats

On this of yours.' But when the matron  
saw

That hinted love was only wasted bait,  
Not risen to, she was bolder. ' Ever  
since

You sent the fatal ring'—I told her 'sent  
To Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever  
since

In all the world my dear one sees but  
you—

In your sweet babe she finds but you—  
she makes

Her heart a mirror that reflects but you.'  
And then the tear fell, the voice broke.

*Her heart !*

I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
Who sees his face in water, and a stone,  
That glances from the bottom of the  
pool,

Strike upward thro' the shadow ; yet at  
last,

Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep  
So skilled a nurse about you always—  
nay !

Some half remorseful kind of pity too—  
Well ! well, you know I married Muriel  
Erne.

'I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
wife'—

I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
child—

When all at once with some electric thrill  
A cold air pass'd between us, and the  
hands

Fell from each other, and were join'd  
again.

No second cloudless honeymoon was  
mine.

For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,  
She dropt the gracious mask of mother-  
hood,

She came no more to meet me, carrying  
you,

Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile,  
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring ;  
Why had I sent the ring at first to her ?

Why had I made her love me thro' the  
ring,

And then had changed ? so fickle are  
men—the best !

Not she—but now my love was hers  
again,

The ring by right, she said, was hers  
again.

At times too shrilling in her angrier  
moods,

'That weak and watery nature love you ?  
No !

"*Io t' amo, Io t' amo*" !' flung herself  
Against my heart, but often while her  
lips

Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,  
As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both. I told her of my vow,  
No pliable idiot I to break my vow ;  
But still she made her outcry for the ring ;  
For one monotonous fancy madden'd  
her,

Till I myself was madden'd with her cry,  
And even that '*Io t' amo*,' those three  
sweet

Italian words, became a weariness.

My people too were scared with eerie  
sounds,

A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,  
A noise of falling weights that never fell,  
Weird whispers, bells that rang without  
a hand,

Door-handles turn'd when none was at  
the door,

And bolted doors that open'd of them-  
selves :

And one betwixt the dark and light had  
seen

*Her*, bending by the cradle of her babe.

*Miriam.* And I remember once that  
being waked

By noises in the house—and no one near—  
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand  
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face  
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and  
pass'd,

And I was quieted, and slept again.

Or is it some half memory of a dream?

*Father.* Your fifth September birth-  
day.

*Miriam.* And the face,  
The hand,—my Mother.

*Father.* *Miriam*, on that day  
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale—  
Mere want of gold—and still for twenty  
years

Bound by the golden cord of their first  
love—

Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to  
share

Their marriage-banquet. *Muriel*, paler  
then

Than ever you were in your cradle,  
moan'd,

'I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,  
I cannot go, go you.' And then she rose,  
She clung to me with such a hard embrace,  
So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
I parted from her, and I went alone.

And when the bridegroom murmur'd,  
'With this ring,'

I felt for what I could not find, the key,  
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.  
I kept it as a sacred amulet

About me,—gone! and gone in that  
embrace!

Then, hurrying home, I found her not  
in house

Or garden—up the tower—an icy air  
Fled by me.—There, the chest was open  
—all

The sacred relics tost about the floor—  
Among them *Muriel* lying on her face—  
I raised her, call'd her 'Muriel, Muriel  
wake!'

The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed eye

Glared at me, as in horror. Dead! I  
took

And chafed the freezing hand. A red  
mark ran

All round one finger pointed straight,  
the rest

Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—and  
maybe stung

With some remorse, had stolen, worn the  
ring—

Then torn it from her finger, or as if—  
For never had I seen her show remorse—

As if—

*Miriam.* —those two Ghost lovers—

*Father.* Lovers yet—

*Miriam.* Yes, yes!

*Father.* —but dead so long, gone up  
so far,

That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd  
Or lost the moment of their past on earth,  
As we forget our wail at being born.

As if—

*Miriam.* —a dearer ghost had—

*Father.* —wrench'd it away.

*Miriam.* Had floated in, with sad  
reproachful eyes,

Till from her own hand she had torn the  
ring

In fright, and fallen dead. And I myself  
Am half afraid to wear it.

*Father.* Well, no more!  
No bridal music this! but fear not you!  
You have the ring she guarded; that  
poor link

With earth is broken, and has left her  
free,

Except that, still drawn downward for  
an hour,

Her spirit hovering by the church, where  
she

Was married too, may linger, till she  
sees

Her maiden coming like a Queen, who  
leaves

Some colder province in the North to  
gain

Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
Clash welcome—linger, till her own, the  
babe

She lean'd to from her Spiritual sphere,

Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd  
with flowers,  
Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—  
Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child  
and go.

## FORLORN

## I

'HE is fled—I wish him dead—  
He that wrought my ruin—  
O the flattery and the craft  
Which were my undoing . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the storms are blowing.

## II

'Who was witness of the crime?  
Who shall now reveal it?  
He is fled, or he is dead,  
Marriage will conceal it . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
While the gloom is growing.'

## III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,  
What is this you're dreaming?  
There is laughter down in Hell  
At your simple scheming . . .  
In the night, in the night,  
When the ghosts are fleeing.

## IV

You to place a hand in his  
Like an honest woman's,  
You that lie with wasted lungs  
Waiting for your summons . . .  
In the night, O the night!  
O the deathwatch beating!

## V

There will come a witness soon  
Hard to be confuted,  
All the world will hear a voice  
Scream you are polluted . . .  
In the night! O the night,  
When the owls are wailing!

## VI

Shame and marriage, Shame and  
marriage,  
Fright and foul dissembling,  
Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,  
Tower and altar trembling . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the mind is failing!

## VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
How your hand is shaking!  
Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
What is this you're taking? . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the house is sleeping.

## VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
O unhappy creature?  
You that would not tread on a worm  
For your gentle nature . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
O the night of weeping!

## IX

Murder would not veil your sin,  
Marriage will not hide it,  
Earth and Hell will brand your name,  
Wretch you must abide it . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
Long before the dawning.

## X

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
Tell him you were lying!  
Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
You that know you're dying . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the grave is yawning.

## XI

No—you will not die before,  
Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;  
You will live till *that* is born,  
Then a little longer . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
While the Fiend is prowling.

## XII

Death and marriage, Death and marriage!

Funeral hearses rolling!  
Black with bridal favours mixt!  
Bridal bells with tolling! . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
When the wolves are howling.

## XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,  
Tell him now or never!  
Tell him all before you die,  
Lest you die for ever . . .  
In the night, O the night,  
Where there's no forgetting.

## XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
All her tale of sadness,  
Blister'd every word with tears,  
And eased her heart of madness . . .  
In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
And while the moon was setting.

## HAPPY

## THE LEPER'S BRIDE

## I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what  
is it that you fear?

Is he sick your mate like mine? have  
you lost him, is he fled?

And there—the heron rises from his  
watch beside the mere,

And flies above the leper's hut, where  
lives the living-dead.

## II

Come back, nor let me know it! would  
he live and die alone?

And has he not forgiven me yet, his  
over-jealous bride,

Who am, and was, and will be his, his  
own and only own,

To share his living death with him,  
die with him side by side?

## III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary  
moor,

Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and  
wears the leper's weed?

The door is open. He! is he standing  
at the door,

My soldier of the Cross? it is he and  
he indeed!

## IV

My roses—will he take them *now*—mine,  
his—from off the tree

We planted both together, happy in  
our marriage morn?

O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought  
Thy fight for Thee,

And Thou hast made him leper to  
compass him with scorn—

## V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the  
coward and the base,

And set a crueller mark than Cain's  
on him, the good and brave!

He sees me, waves me from him. I will  
front him face to face.

You need not wave me from you. I  
would leap into your grave.

\* \* \* \*

## VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the  
conquering sword,

The roses that you cast aside—once  
more I bring you these.

No nearer? do you scorn me when you  
tell me, O my lord,

You would not mar the beauty of your  
bride with your disease.

## VII

You say your body is so foul—then here  
I stand apart,

Who yearn to lay my loving head upon  
your leprous breast.

The leper plague may scale my skin but  
never taint my heart;

Your body is not foul to me, and body  
is foul at best.

## VIII

I loved you first when young and fair,  
 but now I love you most ;  
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on which  
 the worm will feast ;  
 This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy  
 human ghost,  
 This house with all its hateful needs no  
 cleaner than the beast,

## IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which in  
 Eden was divine,  
 This Satan-haunted ruin, this little  
 city of sewers,  
 This wall of solid flesh that comes between  
 your soul and mine,  
 Will vanish and give place to the  
 beauty that endures,

## X

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual  
 height,  
 When we shall stand transfigured, like  
 Christ on Hermon hill,  
 And moving each to music, soul in soul  
 and light in light,  
 Shall flash thro' one another in a  
 moment as we will.

## XI

Foul ! foul ! the word was yours not  
 mine, I worship that right hand  
 Which fell'd the foes before you as the  
 woodman fells the wood,  
 And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back  
 the sun of Holy land,  
 And clove the Moslem crescent moon,  
 and changed it into blood.

## XII

And once I worshipt all too well this  
 creature of decay,  
 For Age will chink the face, and Death  
 will freeze the supplest limbs—  
 Yet you in your mid manhood—O the  
 grief when yesterday  
 They bore the Cross before you to the  
 chant of funeral hymns.

## XIII

'Libera me, Domine !' you sang the  
 Psalm, and when  
 The Priest pronounced you dead, and  
 flung the mould upon your feet,  
 A beauty came upon your face, not that  
 of living men,  
 But seen upon the silent brow when  
 life has ceased to beat.

## XIV

'Libera *nos*, Domine'—you knew not  
 one was there  
 Who saw you kneel beside your bier,  
 and weeping scarce could see ;  
 May I come a little nearer, I that heard,  
 and changed the prayer  
 And sang the married '*nos*' for the  
 solitary '*me*.'

## XV

*My* beauty marred by you? by you ! so  
 be it. All is well  
 If I lose it and myself in the higher  
 beauty, yours.  
*My* beauty lured that falcon from his  
 eyry on the fell,  
 Who never caught one gleam of the  
 beauty which endures—

## XVI

The Count who sought to snap the bond  
 that link'd us life to life,  
 Who whisper'd me 'your Ulric loves'  
 —a little nearer still—  
 He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,  
 your Ulric woos my wife'—  
 A lie by which he thought he could  
 subdue me to his will.

## XVII

I knew that you were near me when I  
 let him kiss my brow ;  
 Did he touch me on the lips? I was  
 jealous, anger'd, vain,  
 And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are  
 you jealous of me now ?  
 Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave  
 you pain.



## XVIII

You never once accused me, but I wept  
 alone, and sigh'd ;  
 In the winter of the Present for the  
 summer of the Past ;  
 That icy winter silence—how it froze you  
 from your bride,  
 Tho' I made one barren effort to break  
 it at the last.

## XIX

I brought you, you remember, these roses,  
 when I knew  
 You were parting for the war, and you  
 took them tho' you frown'd ;  
 You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.  
 All at once the trumpet blew,  
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and  
 you hurl'd them to the ground.

## XX

You parted for the Holy War without a  
 word to me,  
 And clear myself unask'd—not I. My  
 nature was too proud.  
 And him I saw but once again, and far  
 away was he,  
 When I was praying in a storm—the  
 crash was long and loud—

## XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt from  
 falling on your head—  
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming  
 down the fell—  
 I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from  
 Heaven had dash'd him dead,  
 And sent him charr'd and blasted to  
 the deathless fire of Hell.

## XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-  
 pent and repent,  
 And trust myself forgiven by the God  
 to whom I kneel.  
 A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be  
 content  
 Till I be leper like yourself, my love,  
 from head to heel.

## XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would  
 slight our marriage oath :  
 I held you at that moment even dearer  
 than before ;  
 Now God has made you leper in His  
 loving care for both,  
 That we might cling together, never  
 doubt each other more.

## XXIV

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead,  
 has join'd our hands of old ;  
 If man and wife be but one flesh, let  
 mine be leprous too,  
 As dead from all the human race as if  
 beneath the mould ;  
 If you be dead, then I am dead, who  
 only live for you.

## XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be  
 follow'd by the Moon?  
 The leech forsake the dying bed for  
 terror of his life?  
 The shadow leave the Substance in the  
 brooding light of noon?  
 Or if I had been the leper would you  
 have left the wife?

## XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me off  
 —poor roses—must I go—  
 I have worn them year by year—from  
 the bush we both had set—  
 What? fling them to you?—well—that  
 were hardly gracious. No !  
 Your plague but passes by the touch.  
 A little nearer yet !

## XXVII

There, there ! he buried you, the Priest ;  
 the Priest is not to blame,  
 He joins us once again, to his either  
 office true :  
 I thank him. I am happy, happy.  
 Kiss me. In the name  
 Of the everlasting God, I will live and  
 die with you.

IDEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me, Domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds.—BOUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES<sup>1</sup>

## I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
Whose eyes have known this globe of ours,  
Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,  
From Corrientes to Japan,

## II

To you that bask below the Line,  
I soaking here in winter wet—  
The century's three strong eights have met  
To drag me down to seventy-nine

## III

In summer if I reach my day—  
To you, yet young, who breathe the balm  
Of summer-winters by the palm  
And orange grove of Paraguay,

## IV

I tolerant of the colder time,  
Who love the winter woods, to trace  
On paler heavens the branching grace  
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

## V

And see my cedar green, and there  
My giant ilex keeping leaf  
When frost is keen and days are brief—  
Or marvel how in English air

## VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce begun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

## VII

Or watch the waving pine which here  
The warrior of Caprera set,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ulysses,' the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing my poem.

<sup>2</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

A name that 'earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

## VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the foam,  
But chaining fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

## IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you  
For your rich gift, your tale of lands  
I know not,<sup>1</sup> your Arabian sands;  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

## X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;  
Your Oriental Eden-isles,<sup>2</sup>  
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;  
Your wonder of the boiling lake;<sup>3</sup>

## XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>4</sup>  
Phra-bat<sup>5</sup> the step; your Pontic coast;  
Crag-cloister;<sup>6</sup> Anatolian Ghost;<sup>7</sup>  
Hong-Kong,<sup>8</sup> Karnac,<sup>9</sup> and all the rest.

## XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
Your leading hand, and came, my  
friend,  
To prize your various book, and send  
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

<sup>1</sup> The tale of Nejd.

<sup>2</sup> The Philippines.

<sup>3</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>4</sup> The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>5</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>6</sup> The monastery of Sumelas.

<sup>7</sup> Anatolian Spectre stories.

<sup>8</sup> The Three Cities.

<sup>9</sup> Travels in Egypt.

## TO MARY BOYLE

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

## I

'SPRING-FLOWERS'! While you still  
delay to take  
Your leave of Town,  
Our elmtree's ruddy-hearted blossom-  
flake  
Is fluttering down.

## II

Be truer to your promise. There! I  
heard  
Our cuckoo call.  
Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
Nor wait, till all

## III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
plain  
And garden pass,  
And all the gold from each laburnum  
chain  
Drop to the grass.

## IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,  
Dead with the dead?  
For ere she left us, when we met, you  
prest  
My hand, and said

## V

'I come with your spring-flowers.' You  
came not, friend;  
My birds would sing,  
You heard not. Take then this spring-  
flower I send,  
This song of spring,

## VI

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own  
rhyme  
By mine old self,  
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
Laid on the shelf—

## VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whiten-  
ing sloe  
And kingcup blaze,  
And more than half a hundred years ago,  
In rick-fire days,

## VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and paced  
his land  
In fear of worse,  
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand  
Fill with *his* purse.

## IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the  
height  
By tonguester tricks,  
And once—I well remember that red  
night  
When thirty ricks,

## X

All flaming, made an English homestead  
Hell—  
These hands of mine  
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well  
Along the line,

## XI

When this bare dome had not begun to  
gleam  
Thro' youthful curls,  
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,  
His girl of girls ;

## XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with  
Grief  
Sit face to face,  
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief  
In change of place.

## XIII

What use to brood? this life of mingled  
pains  
And joys to me,  
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains  
The Mystery.

## XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the  
wife,  
For ever gone.  
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert  
life  
Without the one.

## XV

The silver year should cease to mourn  
and sigh—  
Not long to wait—  
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I  
To that dim gate.

## XVI

Take, read ! and be the faults your Poet  
makes  
Or many or few,  
He rests content, if his young music  
wakes  
A wish in you

## XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her  
realm  
Of sound and smoke,  
For his clear heaven, and these few lanes  
of elm  
And whispering oak.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

## I

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks  
the mould,  
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
Southern sea,  
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop  
cold  
That trembles not to kisses of the bee :  
Come, Spring, for now from all the  
dripping eaves  
The spear of ice has wept itself away,  
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine  
leaves  
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the  
day.

She comes ! The loosen'd rivulets run ;  
 The frost-bead melts upon her golden  
 hair ;  
 Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,  
 Now wraps her close, now arching  
 leaves her bare  
 To breaths of balmier air ;

## II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome  
 her,  
 About her glance the tits, and shriek  
 the jays,  
 Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker,  
 The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,  
 While round her brows a woodland culver  
 flits,  
 Watching her large light eyes and  
 gracious looks,  
 And in her open palm a halcyon sits  
 Patient—the secret splendour of the  
 brooks.  
 Come, Spring ! She comes on waste and  
 wood,  
 On farm and field : but enter also here,  
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,  
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,  
 Lodge with me all the year !

## III

Once more a downy drift against the  
 brakes,  
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descending  
 slow !  
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes  
 Yon blanching apricot likes now in snow.  
 These will thine eyes not brook in forest-  
 paths,  
 On their perpetual pine, nor round  
 the beech ;  
 They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,  
 Solved in the tender blushes of the  
 peach ;  
 They lose themselves and die  
 On that new life that gems the haw-  
 thorn line ;  
 Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,  
 And out once more in varnish'd glory  
 shine  
 Thy stars of celandine.

## IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven  
 lours,  
 But in the tearful splendour of her  
 smiles  
 I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
 towers  
 Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.  
 Now past her feet the swallow circling  
 flies,  
 A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet  
 her hand ;  
 Her light makes rainbows in my closing  
 eyes,  
 I hear a charm of song thro' all the  
 land.  
 Come, Spring ! She comes, and Earth  
 is glad  
 To roll her North below thy deepening  
 dome,  
 But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,  
 And these low bushes dip their twigs  
 in foam,  
 Make all true hearths thy home.

## V

Across my garden ! and the thicket stirs,  
 The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,  
 The blackcap warbles, and the turtle  
 purrs,  
 The starling claps his tiny castanets.  
 Still round her forehead wheels the  
 woodland dove,  
 And scatters on her throat the sparks  
 of dew,  
 The kingcup fills her footprint, and above  
 Broaden the glowing isles of vernal  
 blue.  
 Hail ample presence of a Queen,  
 Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
 Whose mantle, every shade of glancing  
 green,  
 Flies back in fragrant breezes to display  
 A tunic white as May !

## VI

She whispers, 'From the South I bring  
 you balm,  
 For on a tropic mountain was I born,

While some dark dweller by the coco-  
palm  
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with  
airy morn ;  
From under rose a muffled moan of  
floods ;  
I sat beneath a solitude of snow ;  
There no one came, the turf was fresh,  
the woods  
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their  
vales below.  
I saw beyond their silent tops  
The steaming marshes of the scarlet  
cranes,  
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove  
copse,  
And summer basking in the sultry  
plains  
About a land of canes ;

## VII

'Then from my vapour-girdle soaring  
forth  
I scaled the buoyant highway of the  
birds,  
And drank the dews and drizzle of the  
North,  
That I might mix with men, and hear  
their words  
On pathway'd plains ; for—while my  
hand exults  
Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
flowers  
To work old laws of Love to fresh  
results,  
Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—  
I too would teach the man  
Beyond the darker hour to see the  
bright,  
That his fresh life may close as it began,  
The still-fulfilling promise of a light  
Narrowing the bounds of night.'

## VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
mark  
The coming year's great good and  
varied ills,  
And new developments, whatever spark

Be struck from out the clash of warring  
wills ;  
Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,  
The smoke of war's volcano burst  
again  
From hoary deeps that belt the changeful  
West,  
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings  
of men ;  
Or should those fail, that hold the helm,  
While the long day of knowledge  
grows and warms,  
And in the heart of this most ancient  
realm  
A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms  
Sounding 'To arms ! to arms !'

## IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn  
Who reads thy gradual process, Holy  
Spring.  
Thy leaves possess the season in their  
turn,  
And in their time thy warblers rise on  
wing.  
How surely glidest thou from March to  
May,  
And changest, breathing it, the sullen  
wind,  
Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
Larger and fuller, like the human  
mind !  
Thy warmth from bud to bud  
Accomplish that blind model in the  
seed,  
And men have hopes, which race the  
restless blood,  
That after many changes may succeed  
Life, which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

## I

O YOUNG Mariner,  
You from the haven  
Under the sea-cliff,  
You that are watching  
The gray Magician



With eyes of wonder,  
 I am Merlin,  
 And I am dying,  
 I am Merlin  
 Who follow The Gleam.

## II

Mighty the Wizard  
 Who found me at sunrise  
 Sleeping, and woke me  
 And learn'd me Magic !  
 Great the Master,  
 And sweet the Magic,  
 When over the valley,  
 In early summers,  
 Over the mountain,  
 On human faces,  
 And all around me,  
 Moving to melody,  
 Floated The Gleam.

## III

Once at the croak of a Raven  
 who crost it,  
 A barbarous people,  
 Blind to the magic,  
 And deaf to the melody,  
 Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
 A demon vext me,  
 The light retreated,  
 The landskip darken'd,  
 The melody deaden'd,  
 The Master whisper'd  
 ' Follow the Gleam.'

## IV

Then to the melody,  
 Over a wilderness  
 Gliding, and glancing at  
 Elf of the woodland,  
 Gnome of the cavern,  
 Griffin and Giant,  
 And dancing of Fairies  
 In desolate hollows,  
 And wraiths of the mountain,  
 And rolling of dragons  
 By warble of water,  
 Or cataract music  
 Of falling torrents,  
 Flitted The Gleam.

## V

Down from the mountain  
 And over the level,  
 And streaming and shining on  
 Silent river,  
 Silvery willow,  
 Pasture and plowland,  
 Innocent maidens,  
 Garrulous children,  
 Homestead and harvest,  
 Reaper and gleaner,  
 And rough-ruddy faces  
 Of lowly labour,  
 Slided The Gleam—

## VI

Then, with a melody  
 Stronger and statelier,  
 Led me at length  
 To the city and palace  
 Of Arthur the king ;  
 Touch'd at the golden  
 Cross of the churches,  
 Flash'd on the Tournament,  
 Flicker'd and bicker'd  
 From helmet to helmet,  
 And last on the forehead  
 Of Arthur the blameless  
 Rested The Gleam.

## VII

Clouds and darkness  
 Closed upon Camelot ;  
 Arthur had vanish'd  
 I knew not whither,  
 The king who loved me,  
 And cannot die ;  
 For out of the darkness  
 Silent and slowly  
 The Gleam, that had waned to a  
 wintry glimmer  
 On icy fallow  
 And faded forest,  
 Drew to the valley  
 Named of the shadow,  
 And slowly brightening  
 Out of the glimmer,  
 And slowly moving again to a melody  
 Yearningly tender,

Fell on the shadow,  
No longer a shadow,  
But clothed with The Gleam.

## VIII

And broader and brighter  
The Gleam flying onward,  
Wed to the melody,  
Sang thro' the world;  
And slower and fainter,  
Old and weary,  
But eager to follow,  
I saw, whenever  
In passing it glanced upon  
Hamlet or city,  
That under the Crosses  
The dead man's garden,  
The mortal hillock,  
Would break into blossom;  
And so to the land's  
Last limit I came——  
And can no longer,  
But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers The Gleam.

## IX

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam.

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE

'I read Hayley's Life of Romney the other day—Romney wanted but education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal

was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that "marriage spoils an artist" almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure.' (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward FitzGerald*, vol. i.)

'BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this'

Who are you? What! the Lady Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.  
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe,  
Joan,

Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—

Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail

To conjure and concentrate into form  
And colour all you are, the fault is less  
In me than Art. What Artist ever yet  
Could make pure light live on the canvas?  
Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short word?  
Where am I? snow on all the hills!  
so hot,

So fever'd! never colt would more delight  
To roll himself in meadow grass than I  
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of  
your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?  
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?  
I am all but sure I have—in Kendal  
church—

O yes! I hired you for a season there,  
And then we parted; but you look so  
kind

That you will not deny my sultry throat  
One draught of icy water. There—you  
spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your  
hand shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,  
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are  
they tears?

For me—they do me too much grace—  
for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the fumes  
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,  
—words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back  
again

Into the common day, the sounder self.  
God stay me there, if only for your sake,  
The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted wife  
That ever wore a Christian marriage-  
ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,  
That wife and children drag an Artist  
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the Heaven  
of Art,

And lured me from the household fire on  
earth.

To you my days have been a life-long lie,  
Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you say  
'Take comfort you have won the Painter's  
fame,'

The best in me that sees the worst in me,  
And groans to see it, finds no comfort  
there.

What fame? I am not Raphael,  
Titian—no

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.

Wrong there! The painter's fame? but  
mine, that grew

Blown into glittering by the popular  
breath,

May float awhile beneath the sun, may  
roll

The rainbow hues of heaven about it—

There!

The colour'd bubble bursts above the  
abyss

Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame  
with me

To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen

To flame along another dreary day.

Your hand. How bright you keep your  
marriage-ring!

Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then

Bred this black mood? or am I conscious,  
more

Than other Masters, of the chasm  
between

Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom  
of Age

And suffering cloud the height I stand  
upon

Even from myself? stand? stood . . .  
no more.

And yet

The world would lose, if such a wife as  
you

Should vanish unrecorded. Might I  
crave

One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim  
On your obedience, and my strongest  
wish

Falls flat before your least unwillingness.  
Still would you—if it please you—sit  
to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear  
summer noon,

When seated on a rock, and foot to foot  
With your own shadow in the placid lake,  
You claspt our infant daughter, heart to  
heart.

I had been among the hills, and brought  
you down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this you  
twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,  
Mother and child. A sound from far  
away,

No louder than a bee among the flowers,  
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.

You still'd it for the moment with a song  
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood  
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces  
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.

You should have been—I might have  
made you once,

Had I but known you as I know you  
now—

The true Alcestis of the time. Your  
song—

Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
That I—even I—at times remember'd  
you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat,  
beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my  
sweet!

All mine from your pretty blue eyes  
to your feet,

My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me—three-quarter  
face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my  
bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you.  
this!

And I blind your pretty blue eyes with  
a kiss!

Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of death—

'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow'—

You watch'd not I, she did not grow,  
she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you  
grow,

And gather the roses whenever they  
blow,

And find the white heather wherever  
you go,

My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in  
heaven

With Milton's amaranth. There, there,  
there! a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle  
tools,

Stamp'd into dust—tremulous, all awry,  
Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool,—

Not one stroke firm. This Art, that  
harlot-like

Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-  
like,

Who love her still, and whimper, im-  
potent

To win her back before I die—and  
then—

Then, in the loud world's bastard judg-  
ment-day,

One truth will damn me with the mind-  
less mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation,  
more

Than all the myriad liés, that blacken  
round

The corpse of every man that gains a  
name;

'This model husband, this fine Artist'!  
Fool,

What matters? Six foot deep of burial  
mould

Will dull their comments! Ay, but when  
the shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven,  
and throbs

Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He*  
should ask

'Why left you wife and children? for  
my sake,

According to my word?' and I replied  
'Nay, Lord, for *Art*,' why that would

sound so mean

That all the dead, who wait the doom of  
Hell

For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,  
Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless Mussul-  
man

Who flings his bowstrung Harem in the  
sea,

Would turn, and glare at me, and point  
and jeer,

And gibber at the worm, who, living,  
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and  
lost

Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my head  
Have crazed me. Someone knocking

there without?

No! Will my Indian brother come? to  
find

Me or my coffin? Should I know the  
man?

This worn-out Reason dying in her house

May leave the windows blinded, and if  
so,

Bid him farewell for me, and tell him—  
Hope !

I hear a death-bed Angel whisper ' Hope.'  
" The miserable have no medicine  
But only Hope ! " He said it . . . in  
the play.

His crime was of the senses ; of the mind  
Mine ; worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son—  
O let me lean my head upon your breast.  
' Beat little heart ' on this fool brain of  
mine.

I once had friends—and many—none  
like you.

I love you more than when we married.  
Hope !

O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and  
thence—

For you forgive me, you are sure of that—  
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

## PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .

Quod non . . .

Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis

Annorum series et fuga temporum.—HORACE.

### I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over  
the sacred fountain ?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised  
to the heights of the mountain,

And over the flight of the Ages ! O  
Goddesses, help me up thither !

Lightning may shrivel the laurel of  
Cæsar, but mine would not wither.

Steep is the mountain, but you, you will  
help me to overcome it,

And stand with my head in the zenith,  
and roll my voice from the summit,

Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth  
and her listening nations,

And mixt with the great Sphere-music of  
stars and of constellations.

T

### II

What be those two shapes high over the  
sacred fountain,

Taller than all the Muses, and huger  
than all the mountain ?

On those two known peaks they stand  
ever spreading and heightening ;

Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by  
more than lightning !

Look, in their deep double shadow the  
crown'd ones all disappearing !

Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope  
for a deathless hearing !

' Sounding for ever and ever ? ' pass on !  
the sight confuses—

These are Astronomy and Geology, ter-  
rible Muses !

### III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off  
a pure Pierian altar,

Tho' their music here be mortal need the  
singer greatly care ?

Other songs for other worlds ! the fire  
within him would not falter ;

Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here  
is Homer there.

## BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the  
soul of a man,

And the man said ' Am I your debtor ? '   
And the Lord—' Not yet : but make it

as clean as you can,  
And then I will let you a better.'

### I

If my body come from brutes, my soul  
uncertain, or a fable,

Why not bask amid the senses while  
the sun of morning shines,

I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds,  
and in my stable,

Youth and Health, and birth and  
wealth, and choice of women and  
of wines ?

2 R

## II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old  
Age, save breaking my bones on  
the rack?

Would I had past in the morning that  
looks so bright from afar!

## OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast  
that was linkt with thee eighty  
years back.

Less weight now for the ladder-of-  
heaven that hangs on a star.

## I

If my body come from brutes, tho'  
somewhat finer than their own,

I am heir, and this my kingdom.  
Shall the royal voice be mute?

No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag  
me from the throne,

Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and  
rule thy Province of the brute.

## II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and  
I gaze at a field in the Past,

Where I sank with the body at times  
in the sloughs of a low desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the  
Man is quiet at last

As he stands on the heights of his life  
with a glimpse of a height that is  
higher.

## FAR—FAR—AWAY

## (FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields  
he knew

As where earth's green stole into heaven's  
own hue,

Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?  
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells

Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain  
or joy,

Thro' those three words would haunt him  
when a boy,

Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a  
breath

From some fair dawn beyond the doors  
of death

Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of  
Birth,

The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,  
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words  
could give?

O dying words, can Music make you live  
Far—far—away?

## POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always move,  
Nor always on the plain,

And if we move to such a goal

As Wisdom hopes to gain,

Then you that drive, and know your Craft,  
Will firmly hold the rein,

Nor lend an ear to random cries,

Or you may drive in vain,

For some cry 'Quick' and some cry  
'Slow,'

But, while the hills remain,

Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,

Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.

## BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, 'the centre and crater  
of European confusion,

O you with your passionate shriek for  
the rights of an equal humanity,

How often your Re-volution has proven  
but E-volution

Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of  
a civic insanity!



THE ROSES ON THE  
TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
 When I was in my June, you in your  
 May,  
 Two words, 'My Rose' set all your face  
 aglow,  
 And now that I am white, and you are  
 gray,  
 That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,  
 Blooms in the Past, but close to me  
 to-day  
 As this red rose, which on our terrace here  
 Glows in the blue of fifty miles away.

## THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd  
 with woe  
 You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.  
 And yet be patient. Our Playwright  
 may show  
 In some fifth Act what this wild Drama  
 means.

ON ONE WHO AFFECTED  
AN EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are incom-  
 plete,  
 I prize that soul where man and woman  
 meet,  
 Which types all Nature's male and female  
 plan,  
 But, friend, man-woman is not woman-  
 man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN  
THE ENGLISH

YOU make our faults too gross, and thence  
 maintain  
 Our darker future. May your fears be  
 vain !  
 At times the small black fly upon the pane  
 May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

## THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes  
 February fair-maid,  
 Ever as of old time,  
 Solitary firstling,  
 Coming in the cold time,  
 Prophet of the gay time,  
 Prophet of the May time,  
 Prophet of the roses,  
 Many, many welcomes  
 February fair-maid !

## THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.  
 I know it, I know it, I know it.  
 Light again, leaf again, life again, love  
 again,'  
 Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.  
 Last year you sang it as gladly.  
 'New, new, new, new' ! Is it then so  
 new  
 That you should carol so madly ?

'Love again, song again, nest again, young  
 again,'  
 Never a prophet so crazy !  
 And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,  
 See, there is hardly a daisy.

'Here again, here, here, here, happy  
 year' !  
 O warble unchidden, unbidden !  
 Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,  
 And all the winters are hidden.

## THE OAK

LIVE thy Life,  
 Young and old,  
 Like yon oak,  
 Bright in spring,  
 Living gold ;

Summer-rich  
Then ; and then  
Autumn-changed,  
Soberer-hued  
Gold again.

All his leaves  
Fall'n at length,  
Look, he stands,  
Trunk and bough,  
Naked strength.

## IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose living like I shall  
not find,  
Whose Faith and Work were bells of  
full accord,  
My friend, the most unworldly of man-  
kind,  
Most generous of all Ultramontanes,  
Ward,  
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind  
with mind,  
How loyal in the following of thy  
Lord !

# THE DEATH OF CENONE

## AND OTHER POEMS

### JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER

To E. T.

THERE on the top of the down,  
The wild heather round me and over me  
    June's high blue,  
When I look'd at the bracken so bright  
    and the heather so brown,  
I thought to myself I would offer this  
    book to you,  
This, and my love together,  
To you that are seventy-seven,  
With a faith as clear as the heights of  
    the June-blue heaven,  
And a fancy as summer-new  
As the green of the bracken amid the  
    gloom of the heather.

### TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

I

DEAR Master in our classic town,  
You, loved by all the younger gown  
    There at Balliol,  
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

II

And read a Grecian tale re-told,  
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,  
    Quintus Calaber  
Somewhat lazily handled of old ;

III

And on this white midwinter day—  
For have the far-off hymns of May,  
    All her melodies,  
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

IV

To-day, before you turn again  
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,  
    Hear my cataract's  
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

V

Till, led by dream and vague desire,  
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,  
    Find her warrior  
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

### THE DEATH OF CENONE

CENONE sat within the cave from out  
Whose ivy-matted mouth she used to gaze  
Down at the Troad ; but the goodly view  
Was now one blank, and all the serpent  
    vines  
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had  
    risen,  
And gliding thro' the branches over-  
    bower'd  
The naked Three, were wither'd long  
    ago,  
And thro' the sunless winter morning-  
    mist  
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth.  
    And while she stared at those dead  
    cords that ran  
Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to  
    tree,  
But once were gayer than a dawning sky  
With many a pendent bell and fragrant  
    star,  
Her Past became her Present, and she  
    saw  
Him, climbing toward her with the  
    golden fruit,  
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,  
Her husband in the flush of youth and  
    dawn,  
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God.

Anon from out the long ravine below,  
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at  
first

Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead  
When driven to Hades, but, in coming  
near,

Across the downward thunder of the  
brook

Sounded 'Cenone'; and on a sudden he,  
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,  
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,  
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the  
mist

Rose, like the wraith of his dead self,  
and moan'd

'Cenone, *my* Cenone, while we dwelt  
Together in this valley—happy then—  
Too happy had I died within thine  
arms,

Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our  
peace,

And sunder'd each from each. I am  
dying now

Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me.  
Thou knowest,

Taught by some God, whatever herb or  
balm

May clear the blood from poison, and  
thy fame

Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee  
The shepherd brings his adder-bitten  
lamb,

The wounded warrior climbs from Troy  
to thee.

My life and death are in thy hand. The  
Gods

Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer  
For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.

I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou  
forgive,

Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.  
Cenone, by thy love which once was  
mine,

Help, heal me. I am poison'd to the  
heart.'

'And I to mine' she said 'Adulterer,  
Go back to thine adulteress and die!'

He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist  
at once

Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,

But, ere the mountain rolls into the plain,  
Fell headlong dead; and of the shepherds  
one

Their oldest, and the same who first had  
found

Paris, a naked babe, among the woods  
Of Ida, following lighted on him there,  
And shouted, and the shepherds heard  
and came.

One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the  
squalid hair,

One kiss'd his hand, another closed his  
eyes,

And then, remembering the gay playmate  
rear'd

Among them, and forgetful of the man,  
Whose crime had half unpeopled Ilium,  
these

All that day long labour'd, hewing the  
pines,

And built their shepherd-prince a funeral  
pile;

And, while the star of eve was drawing  
light

From the dead sun, kindled the pyre,  
and all

Stood round it, hush'd, or calling on his  
name.

But when the white fog vanish'd like  
a ghost

Before the day, and every topmost pine  
Spired into bluest heaven, still in her  
cave,

Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon  
By ghastlier than the Gorgon head, a  
face,—

His face deform'd by lurid blotch and  
blain—

There, like a creature frozen to the heart  
Beyond all hope of warmth, Cenone sat  
Not moving, till in front of that ravine

Which drowns in gloom, self-darken'd  
from the west,

The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy.

Then her head sank, she slept, and  
thro' her dream

A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,  
Cenone! I can wrong thee now no  
more,

Cenone, my Cenone,' and the dream

Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath  
the stars.

What star could burn so low? not  
Ilion yet.

What light was there? She rose and  
slowly down,

By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,  
Paced, following, as in trance, the silent  
cry.

She waked a bird of prey that scream'd  
and past;

She roused a snake that hissing writhed  
away;

A panther sprang across her path, she  
heard

The shriek of some lost life among the  
pines,

But when she gain'd the broader vale,  
and saw

The ring of faces redden'd by the flames  
Enfolding that dark body which had lain  
Of old in her embrace, paused—and then  
ask'd

Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'  
But every man was mute for reverence.

Then moving quickly forward till the heat  
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice  
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon  
the pyre?'

Whereon their oldest and their boldest  
said,

'He, whom thou wouldst not heal!' and  
all at once

The morning light of happy marriage  
broke

Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,  
And muffling up her comely head, and  
crying

'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral  
pile,

And mixt herself with *him* and past in  
fire.

### ST. TELEMACHUS

HAD the fierce ashes of some fiery peak  
Been hurl'd so high they ranged about  
the globe?

For day by day, thro' many a blood-red  
eve,

In that four-hundredth summer after  
Christ,

The wrathful sunset glared against a cross  
Rear'd on the tumbled ruins of an old  
fane

No longer sacred to the Sun, and flamed  
On one huge slope beyond, where in his  
cave

The man, whose pious hand had built  
the cross,

A man who never changed a word with  
men,

Fasted and pray'd, Telemachus the Saint.  
Eve after eve that haggard anchorite  
Would haunt the desolated fane, and  
there

Gaze at the ruin, often mutter low  
'Vicisti Galilæe'; louder again,

Spurning a shatter'd fragment of the  
God,

'Vicisti Galilæe!' but—when now  
Bathed in that lurid crimson—ask'd 'Is  
earth

On fire to the West? or is the Demon-  
god

Wroth at his fall?' and heard an answer  
'Wake

Thou deedless dreamer, lazying out a life  
Of self-suppression, not of selfless love.'  
And once a flight of shadowy fighters  
crost

The disk, and once, he thought, a shape  
with wings

Came sweeping by him, and pointed to  
the West,

And at his ear he heard a whisper  
'Rome'

And in his heart he cried 'The call of  
God!'

And call'd arose, and, slowly plunging  
down

Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face  
By waste and field and town of alien  
tongue,

Following a hundred sunsets, and the  
sphere

Of westward-wheeling stars; and every  
dawn

Struck from him his own shadow on to  
Rome.

Foot-sore, way-worn, at length he  
 touch'd his goal,  
 The Christian city. All her splendour  
 fail'd  
 To lure those eyes that only yearn'd to  
 see,  
 Fleeting betwixt her column'd palace-  
 walls,  
 The shape with wings. Anon there past  
 a crowd  
 With shameless laughter, Pagan oath,  
 and jest,  
 Hard Romans brawling of their mon-  
 strous games;  
 He, all but deaf thro' age and weariness,  
 And muttering to himself 'The call of  
 God'  
 And borne along by that full stream of  
 men,  
 Like some old wreck on some indrawing  
 sea,  
 Gain'd their huge Colosseum. The caged  
 beast  
 Yell'd, as he yell'd of yore for Christian  
 blood.  
 Three slaves were trailing a dead lion  
 away,  
 One, a dead man. He stumbled in, and  
 sat  
 Blinded; but when the momentary gloom,  
 Made by the noonday blaze without, had  
 left  
 His aged eyes, he raised them, and  
 beheld  
 A blood-red awning waver overhead,  
 The dust send up a steam of human  
 blood,  
 The gladiators moving toward their fight,  
 And eighty thousand Christian faces  
 watch  
 Man murder man. A sudden strength  
 from heaven,  
 As some great shock may wake a palsied  
 limb,  
 Turn'd him again to boy, for up he  
 sprang,  
 And glided lightly down the stairs, and  
 o'er

The barrier that divided beast from man  
 Slipt, and ran on, and flung himself  
 between  
 The gladiatorial swords, and call'd 'For-  
 bear  
 In the great name of Him who died for  
 men,  
 Christ Jesus!' For one moment after-  
 ward  
 A silence follow'd as of death, and then  
 A hiss as from a wilderness of snakes,  
 Then one deep roar as of a breaking sea,  
 And then a shower of stones that stoned  
 him dead,  
 And then once more a silence as of death.  
 His dream became a deed that woke  
 the world,  
 For while the frantic rabble in half-amaze  
 Stared at him dead, thro' all the nobler  
 hearts  
 In that vast Oval ran a shudder of shame.  
 The Baths, the Forum gabbled of his  
 death,  
 And preachers linger'd o'er his dying  
 words,  
 Which would not die, but echo'd on to  
 reach  
 Honorius, till he heard them, and de-  
 creed  
 That Rome no more should wallow in  
 this old lust  
 Of Paganism, and make her festal hour  
 Dark with the blood of man who mur-  
 der'd man.

[For Honorius, who succeeded to the sovereignty over Europe, suppress the gladiatorial combats practised of old in Rome, on occasion of the following event. There was one Telemachus, embracing the ascetic mode of life, who setting out from the East and arriving at Rome for this very purpose, while that accursed spectacle was being performed, entered himself the circus, and descending into the arena, attempted to hold back those who wielded deadly weapons against each other. The spectators of the murderous fray, possessed with the drunken glee of the demon who delights in such bloodshed, stoned to death the preacher of peace. The admirable Emperor learning this put a stop to that evil exhibition.—Theodoret's *Ecclesiastical History*.]



## AKBAR'S DREAM

AN INSCRIPTION BY ABUL FAZL FOR  
A TEMPLE IN KASHMIR (Bloch-  
mann xxxii.).

O GOD in every temple I see people that  
see thee, and in every language I hear  
spoken, people praise thee.

Polytheism and Islâm feel after thee.

Each religion says, 'Thou art one, with-  
out equal.'

If it be a mosque people murmur the  
holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church,  
people ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian  
cloister, and sometimes the mosque.

But it is thou whom I search from  
temple to temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with either  
heresy or orthodoxy; for neither of them  
stands behind the screen of thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to  
the orthodox.

But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to  
the heart of the perfume seller.

AKBAR and ABUL FAZL *before the palace  
at Futehpur-Sikri at night.*

'LIGHT of the nations' ask'd his  
Chronicler

Of Akbar 'what has darken'd thee to-  
night?'

Then, after one quick glance upon the  
stars,

And turning slowly toward him, Akbar  
said

'The shadow of a dream—an idle one  
It may be. Still I raised my heart to  
heaven,

I pray'd against the dream. To pray,  
to do—

To pray, to do according to the prayer,  
Are, both, to worship Alla, but the  
prayers,

That have no successor in deed, are faint  
And pale in Alla's eyes, fair mothers  
they

Dying in childbirth of dead sons. I vow'd  
Whate'er my dreams, I still would do  
the right

Thro' all the vast dominion which a sword,  
That only conquers men to conquer  
peace,

Has won me. Alla be my guide!

But come,

My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,  
Sit by my side. While thou art one  
with me,

I seem no longer like a lonely man

In the king's garden, gathering here and  
there

From each fair plant the blossom choicest-  
grown

To wreath a crown not only for the  
king

But in due time for every Mussulmân,  
Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and  
Parsee,

Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan.

Well spake thy brother in his hymn to  
heaven

"Thy glory baffles wisdom. All the  
tracks

Of science making toward Thy Perfect-  
ness

Are blinding desert sand; we scarce can  
spell

The Alif of Thine alphabet of Love."

He knows Himself, men nor themselves  
nor Him,

For every splinter'd fraction of a sect  
Will clamour "I am on the Perfect Way,  
All else is to perdition."

Shall the rose  
Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the  
palm

Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?  
The mango spurn the melon at his foot?  
"Mine is the one fruit Alla made for  
man."

Look how the living pulse of Alla beats  
Thro' all His world. If every single star  
Should shriek its claim "I only am in  
heaven"

Why that were such sphere-music as the  
Greek

Had hardly dream'd of. There is light  
in all,

And light, with more or less of shade,  
in all

Man-modes of worship ; but our Ulama,  
 Who "sitting on green sofas contem-  
     plate  
 The torment of the damn'd" already,  
     these  
 Are like wild brutes new-caged—the  
     narrower  
 The cage, the more their fury. Me they  
     front  
 With sullen brows. What wonder ! I  
     decreed  
 That even the dog was clean, that men  
     may taste  
 Swine-flesh, drink wine ; they know too  
     that whene'er  
 In our free Hall, where each philosophy  
 And mood of faith may hold its own,  
     they blurt  
 Their furious formalisms, I but hear  
 The clash of tides that meet in narrow  
     seas.—  
 Not the Great Voice not the true Deep.

To drive

A people from their ancient fold of Faith,  
 And wall them up perforce in mine—  
     unwise,  
 Unkinglike ;—and the morning of my  
     reign  
 Was redden'd by that cloud of shame  
     when I . . .

I hate the rancour of their castes and  
     creeds,

I let men worship as they will, I reap  
 No revenue from the field of unbelief.  
 I cull from every faith and race the best  
 And bravest soul for counsellor and  
     friend.

I loathe the very name of infidel.  
 I stagger at the Korân and the sword.  
 I shudder at the Christian and the stake ;  
 Yet "Alla," says their sacred book, "is  
     Love,"

And when the Goan Padre quoting Him,  
 Issa Ben Mariam, his own prophet, cried  
 "Love one another little ones" and  
     "bless"

Whom ? even "your persecutors" ! there  
     methought

The cloud was rifted by a purer gleam  
 Than glances from the sun of our Islâm.

And thou rememberest what a fury  
     shook

Those pillars of a moulder'd faith, when  
     he,

That other, prophet of their fall, pro-  
     claimed

His Master as "the Sun of Righteous-  
     ness,"

Yea, Alla here on earth, who caught  
     and held

His people by the bridle-rein of Truth.

What art thou saying ? "And was  
     not Alla call'd

In old Irân the Sun of Love ? and Love  
 The net of truth ?"

A voice from old Irân !

Nay, but I know it—*hîs*, the hoary Sheik,  
 On whom the women shrieking "Atheist"  
     flung

Filth from the roof, the mystic melodist  
 Who all but lost himself in Alla, him

Abû Saïd——

—a sun but dimly seen

Here, till the mortal morning mists of  
     earth

Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed  
     and race

Shall bear false witness, each of each, no  
     more,

But find their limits by that larger light,  
 And overstep them, moving easily  
 Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,  
 The truth of Love.

The sun, the sun ! they rail  
 At me the Zoroastrian. Let the Sun,  
 Who heats our earth to yield us grain  
     and fruit,

And laughs upon thy field as well as  
     mine,

And warms the blood of Shiah and  
     Sunnee,

Symbol the Eternal ! Yea and may not  
     kings

Express Him also by their warmth of  
     love

For all they rule—by equal law for all ?  
 By deeds a light to men ?

But no such light

Glanced from our Presence on the face  
     of one,

Who breaking in upon us yesternorn,  
With all the Hells a-glare in either eye,  
Yell'd "hast *thou* brought us down a  
new Korân

From heaven? art *thou* the Prophet?  
canst *thou* work

Miracles?" and the wild horse, anger,  
plunged

To fling me, and fail'd. Miracles! no,  
not I

Nor he, nor any. I can but lift the torch  
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,  
And gaze on this great miracle, the  
World,

Adoring That who made, and makes,  
and is,

And is not, what I gaze on—all else  
Form,

Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.

Ay but, my friend, thou knowest I  
hold that forms

Are needful: only let the hand that rules,  
With politic care, with utter gentleness,  
Mould them for all his people.

And what are forms?

Fair garments, plain or rich, and fitting  
close

Or flying looselier, warm'd but by the  
heart

Within them, moved but by the living  
limb,

And cast aside, when old, for newer,—  
Forms!

The Spiritual in Nature's market-place—

The silent Alphabet-of-heaven-in-man

Made vocal—banners blazoning a Power

That is not seen and rules from far away—

A silken cord let down from Paradise,

When fine Philosophies would fail, to  
draw

The crowd from wallowing in the mire  
of earth,

And all the more, when these behold  
their Lord,

Who shaped the forms, obey them, and  
himself

Here on this bank in *some* way live the  
life

Beyond the bridge, and serve that Infinite

Within us, as without, that All-in-all,

And over all, the never-changing One  
And ever-changing Many, in praise of  
Whom

The Christian bell, the cry from off the  
mosque,

And vaguer voices of Polytheism

Make but one music, harmonising  
"Pray."

There westward—under yon slow-  
falling star,

The Christians own a Spiritual Head;

And following thy true counsel, by thine  
aid,

Myself am such in our Islâm, for no

Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse

My myriads into union under one;

To hunt the tiger of oppression out

From office; and to spread the Divine  
Faith

Like calming oil on all their stormy  
creeds,

And fill the hollows between wave and  
wave;

To nurse my children on the milk of  
Truth,

And alchemise old hates into the gold

Of Love, and make it current; and beat  
back

The menacing poison of intolerant priests,

Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—

One Alla! one Kalifa!

Still—at times

A doubt, a fear,—and yester afternoon

I dream'd,—thou knowest how deep a  
well of love

My heart is for my son, Saleem, mine  
heir,—

And yet so wild and wayward that my  
dream—

He glares askance at thee as one of those

Who mix the wines of heresy in the cup

Of counsel—so—I pray thee—

Well, I dream'd

That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred  
fane,

A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor  
Church,

But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd

To every breath from heaven, and Truth  
and Peace

And Love and Justice came and dwelt  
therein ;  
But while we stood rejoicing, I and thou,  
I heard a mocking laugh "the new  
Korân !"  
And on the sudden, and with a cry  
"Saleem"  
Thou, thou—I saw thee fall before me,  
and then  
Me too the black-wing'd Azrael over-  
came,  
But Death had ears and eyes ; I watch'd  
my son,  
And those that follow'd, loosen, stone  
from stone,  
All my fair work ; and from the ruin  
arose  
The shriek and curse of trampled millions,  
even  
As in the time before ; but while I  
groan'd,  
From out the sunset pour'd an alien race,  
Who fitted stone to stone again, and  
Truth,  
Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt  
therein,  
Nor in the field without were seen or  
heard  
Fires of Sûttee, nor wail of baby-wife,  
Or Indian widow ; and in sleep I said  
"All praise to Alla by whatever hands  
My mission be accomplish'd !" but we  
hear  
Music : our palace is awake, and morn  
Has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night  
From off the rosy cheek of waking Day.  
Our hymn to the sun. They sing it.  
Let us go.'

## HYMN

## I

Once again thou flamest heavenward,  
once again we see thee rise.  
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening  
human hearts and eyes.  
Every morning here we greet it,  
bowing lowly down before thee,  
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in  
thine ever-changing skies.

## II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing  
light from clime to clime,  
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee  
monarch in their woodland rhyme.  
Warble bird, and open flower, and,  
men, below the dome of azure  
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the  
flame that measures Time !

## NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was born October 14, 1542, and died 1605. At 13 he succeeded his father Humayun ; at 18 he himself assumed the sole charge of government. He subdued and ruled over fifteen large provinces ; his empire included all India north of the Vindhya Mountains—in the south of India he was not so successful. His tolerance of religions and his abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame. He invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples : and his legislation was remarkable for vigour, justice and humanity.

'Thy glory baffles wisdom.' The Emperor quotes from a hymn to the Deity by Faizi, brother of Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and minister, who wrote the *Ain i Akbari* (Annals of Akbar). His influence on his age was immense. It may be that he and his brother Faizi led Akbar's mind away from Islâm and the Prophet—this charge is brought against him by every Muhammadan writer ; but Abul Fazl also led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered Court, the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races, which Islâm in few other countries had to solve, was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result (Blochmann xxix.).

Abul Fazl thus gives an account of himself 'The advice of my Father with difficulty kept me back from acts of folly ; my mind had no rest and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits on Lebanon. I longed for interviews with the Llamás of Tibet or with the padres of Portugal, and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land.'

He became the intimate friend and adviser of Akbar, and helped him in his tolerant system of government. Professor Blochmann writes 'Impressed with a favourable idea of the value of his Hindu subjects, he (Akbar) had resolved when pensively sitting in the evenings on the solitary

stone at Futehpur-Sikri to rule with an even hand all men in his dominions; but as the extreme views of the learned and the lawyers continually urged him to persecute instead of to heal, he instituted discussions, because, believing himself to be in error, he thought it his duty as ruler to inquire.' 'These discussions took place every Thursday night in the Ibadat-khana a building at Futehpur-Sikri, erected for the purpose' (Malleeson).

In these discussions Abul Fazl became a great power, and he induced the chief of the disputants to draw up a document defining the 'divine Faith' as it was called, and assigning to Akbar the rank of a Mujahid, or supreme khalifah, the vicegerent of the one true God.

Abul Fazl was finally murdered at the instigation of Akbar's son Salim, who in his Memoirs declares that it was Abul Fazl who had perverted his father's mind so that he denied the divine mission of Mahomet, and turned away his love from his son.

*Faizi.* When Akbar conquered the North-West Provinces of India, Faizi, then 20, began his life as a poet, and earned his living as a physician. He is reported to have been very generous and to have treated the poor for nothing. His fame reached Akbar's ears who commanded him to come to the camp at Chitor. Akbar was delighted with his varied knowledge and scholarship and made the poet teacher to his sons. Faizi at 33 was appointed Chief Poet (1588). He collected a fine library of 4300 MSS. and died at the age of 40 (1595) when Akbar incorporated his collection of rare books in the Imperial Library.

*The warring world of Hindustan.* Akbar's rapid conquests and the good government of his fifteen provinces with their complete military, civil and political systems make him conspicuous among the great kings of history.

*The Goan Padre.* Abul Fazl relates that 'one night the Ibadat-khana was brightened by the presence of Padre Rodolpho, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him and this afforded an opportunity for the display of the calm judgment and justice of the assembly. These men brought forward the old received assertions, and did not attempt to arrive at truth by reasoning. Their statements were torn to pieces, and they were nearly put to shame, when they began to attack the contradictions of the Gospel, but they could not prove their assertions. With perfect calmness, and earnest conviction of the truth he replied to their arguments.'

*Abû Sa'îd.* 'Love is the net of Truth, Love is the noose of God' is a quotation from the great Sufee poet Abû Sa'îd—born A.D. 968, died at the age of 83. He is a mystical poet, and some of his expressions have been compared to our George Herbert. Of Shaikh Abû Sa'îd it is recorded that he said, 'when my affairs had reached a certain pitch I buried under the dust my books and opened a shop on my own account (i.e. began to teach with authority), and verily men represented me as that which I was not, until it came to this, that they went to the Qâdhî and testified against me of unbelief; and women got upon the roofs and cast unclean things upon me.' (Vide reprint from article in *National Review*, March 1891, by C. J. Pickering.)

*Aziz.* I am not aware that there is any record of such intrusion upon the king's privacy, but the expressions in the text occur in a letter sent by Akbar's foster-brother Aziz, who refused to come to court when summoned and threw up his government, and 'after writing an insolent and reproachful letter to Akbar in which he asked him if he had received a book from heaven, or if he could work miracles like Mahomet that he presumed to introduce a new religion, warned him that he was on the way to eternal perdition, and concluded with a prayer to God to bring him back into the path of salvation' (Elphinstone).

'The Koran, the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David are called *books* by way of excellence, and their followers "People of the Book"' (Elphinstone).

*Akbar* according to Abdel Kadir had his son Murad instructed in the Gospel, and used to make him begin his lessons 'In the name of Christ' instead of in the usual way 'In the name of God.'

*To drive*  
*A people from their ancient fold of Truth, etc.*  
Malleeson says 'This must have happened because Akbar states it, but of the forced conversions I have found no record. This must have taken place whilst he was still a minor, and whilst the chief authority was wielded by Bairam.'

*'I reap no revenue from the field of unbelief.'*  
The Hindus are fond of pilgrimages and Akbar removed a remunerative tax raised by his predecessors on pilgrimages. He also abolished the *fezza* or capitation tax on those who differed from the Mahomedan faith. He discouraged all *excessive* prayers, fasts and pilgrimages.

*Suttee.* Akbar decreed that every widow who showed the least desire not to be burnt on her

husband's funeral pyre, should be let go free and unharmed.

*baby-wife.* He forbad marriage before the age of puberty.

*Indian widow.* Akbar ordained that re-marriage was lawful.

*Music.* 'About a watch before daybreak,' says Abul Fazl, the musicians played to the king in the palace. 'His Majesty had such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess.'

'*The Divine Faith.*' The Divine Faith slowly passed away under the immediate successors of Akbar. An idea of what the Divine Faith was may be gathered from the inscription at the head of the poem. The document referred to, Abul Fazl says 'brought about excellent results (1) the Court became a gathering place of the sages and learned of all creeds; the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized, and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good features; (2) perfect toleration or peace with all was established; and (3) the perverse and evil-minded were covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty, and these stood in the pillory of disgrace.' Dated September 1579—Ragab 987 (Blochmann xiv.).

## THE BANDIT'S DEATH

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT<sup>1</sup>

O GREAT AND GALLANT SCOTT,  
TRUE GENTLEMAN, HEART, BLOOD AND BONE,  
I WOULD IT HAD BEEN MY LOT  
TO HAVE SEEN THEE, AND HEARD THEE, AND  
KNOWN.

SIR, do you see this dagger? nay, why  
do you start aside?

I was not going to stab you, tho' I *am*  
the Bandit's bride.

You have set a price on his head: I may  
claim it without a lie.

What have I here in the cloth? I will  
show it you by-and-by.

<sup>1</sup> I have adopted Sir Walter Scott's version of the following story as given in his last journal (Death of Il Bizarro)—but I have taken the liberty of making some slight alterations.

Sir, I was once a wife. I had one brief  
summer of bliss.

But the Bandit had woo'd me in vain,  
and he stabb'd my Piero with this.

And he dragg'd me up there to his cave  
in the mountain, and there one  
day

He had left his dagger behind him. I  
found it. I hid it away.

For he reek'd with the blood of Piero;  
his kisses were red with his crime,  
And I cried to the Saints to avenge me.  
They heard, they bided their time.

In a while I bore him a son, and he  
loved to dandle the child,  
And that was a link between us; but I  
—to be reconciled?—

No, by the Mother of God, tho' I think  
I hated him less,  
And—well, if I sinn'd last night, I will  
find the Priest and confess.

Listen! we three were alone in the dell  
at the close of the day.

I was lilting a song to the babe, and it  
laugh'd like a dawn in May.

Then on a sudden we saw your soldiers  
crossing the ridge,  
And he caught my little one from me:  
we dipt down under the bridge

By the great dead pine—you know it—  
and heard as we crouch'd below,  
The clatter of arms, and voices, and men  
passing to and fro.

Black was the night when we crept away  
—not a star in the sky—  
Hush'd as the heart of the grave, till the  
little one utter'd a cry.

I whisper'd 'give it to me,' but he would  
not answer me—then  
He gript it so hard by the throat that  
the boy never cried again.



We return'd to his cave—the link was  
broken—he sobb'd and he wept,  
And curs'd himself; then he yawn'd, for  
the wretch *could* sleep, and he  
slept

Ay, till dawn stole into the cave, and a  
ray red as blood

Glanced on the strangled face—I could  
make Sleep Death, if I would—

Glared on at the murder'd son, and the  
murderous father at rest, . . .

I drove the blade that had slain my hus-  
band thrice thro' his breast.

He was loved at least by his dog: it was  
chain'd, but its horrible yell

'She has kill'd him, has kill'd him, has  
kill'd him' rang out all down  
thro' the dell,

Till I felt I could end myself too with the  
dagger—so deafen'd and dazed—

Take it, and save me from it! I fled.  
I was all but crazed

With the grief that gnaw'd at my heart,  
and the weight that dragg'd at  
my hand;

But thanks to the Blessed Saints that I  
came on none of his band;

And the band will be scatter'd now their  
gallant captain is dead,

For I with this dagger of his—do you  
doubt me? Here is his head!

## THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

This is written in the dialect which was cur-  
rent in my youth at Spilsby and in the country  
about it.

### I

EH? good daäy! good daäy! thaw it  
bean't not mooch of a daäy,

Nasty, casselty<sup>1</sup> weather! an' mea haäfe  
down wi' my haäy!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Casselty,' casualty, chance weather.

<sup>2</sup> 'Haäfe down wi' my haäy,' while my grass  
is only half-mown.

### II

How be the farm gittin on? noäways.  
Gittin on i'deeäd!

Why, tonups was haäfe on 'em fingers  
an' toäs,<sup>1</sup> an' the mare brokken-  
kneeäd,

An' pigs didn't sell at fall,<sup>2</sup> an' wa lost  
wer Haldeny cow,

An' it beäts ma to knaw wot she died on,  
but wool's looking oop ony how.

### III

An' soä they've maäde tha a parson, an'  
thou'll git along, niver fear,

Fur I beän chuch-warden mysen i' the  
parish fur fifteen year.

Well—sin ther beä chuch-wardens, ther  
mun be parsons an' all,

An' if t'one stick alongside t'uther<sup>3</sup> the  
chuch weänt happen a fall.

### IV

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' ageän the  
toithe an' the raäte,

Till I fun<sup>4</sup> that it warn't not the gaäinist<sup>5</sup>  
waäy to the narra Gaäte.

An' I can't abeär 'em, I can't, fur a lot  
on 'em coom'd ta-year<sup>6</sup>—

I wur down wi' the rheumatis then—to  
*my* pond to wesh thessens there—

Sa I sticks like the ivin<sup>7</sup> as long as I  
lives to the owd chuch now,

Fur they wesh'd their sins i' *my* pond,  
an' I doubts they poison'd the cow.

### V

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop. They says  
'at he coom'd fra nowt—

Burn i' traäde. Sa I warrants 'e niver  
said haäfe wot 'e thowt,

But 'e creeäpt an' 'e crawl'd along, till  
'e feeäld 'e could howd 'is oän,

Then 'e married a greät Yerl's darter,  
an' sits o' the Bishop's throän.

<sup>1</sup> 'Fingers and toes,' a disease in turnips.

<sup>2</sup> 'Fall,' autumn.

<sup>3</sup> 'If t'one stick alongside t'uther,' if the one  
hold by the other. One is pronounced like 'own.'

<sup>4</sup> 'Fun,' found.

<sup>5</sup> 'Gaäinist,' nearest.

<sup>6</sup> 'Ta-year,' this year.

<sup>7</sup> 'Ivin,' ivy.

## VI

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an'  
tha weant be taakin' offence,  
Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a  
hoonderd haäcre o' sense—  
But sich an obstropulous<sup>1</sup> lad—naay,  
naay—fur I minds tha sa well,  
Tha'd niver not hopple<sup>2</sup> thy tongue, an'  
the tongue's sit afire o' Hell,  
As I says to my missis to-daay, when she  
hurl'd a plaäte at the cat  
An' anoother ageän my noäse. Ya was  
niver sa bad as that.

## VII

But I minds when i' Howlaby beck won  
daäy ya was ticklin' o' trout,  
An' keeäper 'e seed ya an roon'd, an' 'e  
beal'd<sup>3</sup> to ya 'Lad coom hout'  
An' ya stood oop naäkt i' the beck, an'  
ya tell'd 'im to knaw his awn  
plaäce  
An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya  
thraw'd the fish i' 'is faäce,  
An' 'e torn'd<sup>4</sup> as red as a stag-tuckey's<sup>5</sup>  
wattles, but theer an' then  
I coämb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd  
niver not do it ageän.

## VIII

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden,  
when thou was a height-year-  
howd,<sup>6</sup>  
An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pip-  
pins as iver they'd 'owd,<sup>7</sup>  
An' thou was as peärky<sup>8</sup> as owt, an' tha  
maäde me as mad as mad,  
But I says to tha 'keap 'em, an' wel-  
come' fur thou was the Parson's  
lad.

<sup>1</sup> 'Obstropulous,' obstreperous—here the Curate makes a sign of deprecation.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hopple' or 'hobble,' to tie the legs of a skittish cow when she is being milked.

<sup>3</sup> 'Beal'd,' bellowed.

<sup>4</sup> In such words as 'torned' (turned), 'hurled,' the *r* is hardly audible.

<sup>5</sup> 'Stag-tuckey,' turkey-cock.

<sup>6</sup> 'Height-year-howd,' eight-year-old.

<sup>7</sup> 'Owd,' hold. <sup>8</sup> 'Peärky,' pert.

## IX

An Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then  
taäkes kindly to me,  
An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an'  
coom'd to the top o' the tree,  
Fur Quoloty's hall my friends, an' they  
maäkes ma a help to the poor,  
When I gits the plaäte fuller o' Soondays  
nor ony chuch-warden afor,  
Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep'  
mysen meeäk as a lamb,  
An' saw by the Graäce o' the Lord, Mr.  
Harry, I ham wot I ham.

## X

But Parson 'e *will* speäk out, saw, now  
'e be sixty-seven,  
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur  
owt but the Kingdom o' Heaven;  
An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver  
tha meäns to git 'igher,  
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld,<sup>1</sup>  
an' not the faults o' the Squire.  
An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' some-  
whers i' the Wowd<sup>2</sup> or the Fen,  
If tha cottons down to thy betters, an'  
keeäps thysen to thysen.  
But niver not speäk plaain out, if tha  
wants to git forrards a bit,  
But creeäp along the hedge-bottoms, an'  
thou'll be a Bishop yit.

## XI

Naäy, but tha *mun* speäk hout to the  
Baptises here i' the town,  
Fur moäst on 'em talks ageän tithe, an'  
I'd like tha to preäch 'em down,  
Fur *they've* bin a-preächin' *mea* down,  
they heve, an' I haätes 'em now,  
Fur they leäved their nasty sins i' *my*  
pond, an' it poison'd the cow.

<sup>1</sup> 'Wo'ld,' the world. Short *o*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Wowd,' wold.

## CHARITY

## I

WHAT am I doing, you say to me,  
 'wasting the sweet summer hours'?  
 Haven't you eyes? I am dressing the  
 grave of a woman with flowers.

## II

For a woman ruin'd the world, as God's  
 own scriptures tell,  
 And a man ruin'd mine, but a woman,  
 God bless her, kept me from Hell.

## III

Love me? O yes, no doubt—how long  
 —till you threw me aside!  
 Dresses and laces and jewels and never  
 a ring for the bride.

## IV

All very well just now to be calling me  
 darling and sweet,  
 And after a while would it matter so  
 much if I came on the street?

## V

You when I met you first—when *he*  
 brought you!—I turn'd away  
 And the hard blue eyes have it still, that  
 stare of a beast of prey.

## VI

You were his friend—you—you—when  
 he promised to make me his bride,  
 And you knew that he meant to betray  
 me—you knew—you knew that  
 he lied.

## VII

He married an heiress, an orphan with  
 half a shire of estate,—  
 I sent him a desolate wail and a curse,  
 when I learn'd my fate.

## VIII

For I used to play with the knife, creep  
 down to the river-shore,

## T

Moan to myself 'one plunge—then quiet  
 for evermore.'

## IX

Would the man have a touch of remorse  
 when he heard what an end was  
 mine?  
 Or brag to his fellow rakes of his conquest  
 over their wine?

## X

Money—my hire—*his* money—I sent  
 him back what he gave,—  
 Will you move a little that way? your  
 shadow falls on the grave.

## XI

Two trains clash'd: then and there he  
 was crush'd in a moment and  
 died,  
 But the new-wedded wife was unharm'd,  
 tho' sitting close at his side.

## XII

She found my letter upon him, my wail  
 of reproach and scorn;  
 I had cursed the woman he married, and  
 him, and the day I was born.

## XIII

They put him aside for ever, and after a  
 week—no more—  
 A stranger as welcome as Satan—a widow  
 came to my door:

## XIV

So I turn'd my face to the wall, I was  
 mad, I was raving-wild,  
 I was close on that hour of dishonour,  
 the birth of a baseborn child.

## XV

O you that can flatter your victims, and  
 juggle, and lie and cajole,  
 Man, can you even guess at the love of  
 a soul for a soul?

## XVI

I had cursed her as woman and wife,  
and in wife and woman I found  
The tenderest Christ-like creature that  
ever stept on the ground.

## XVII

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed  
me, she sat day and night by my  
bed,  
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy  
born happily dead.

## XVIII

And her name? what was it? I ask'd  
her. She said with a sudden glow  
On her patient face 'My dear, I will  
tell you before I go.'

## XIX

And I when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd,  
I sprang from my seat,  
I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung  
myself down at her feet,

## XX

And we pray'd together for *him*, for *him*  
who had given her the name.  
She has left me enough to live on. I  
need no wages of shame.

## XXI

She died of a fever caught when a nurse  
in a hospital ward.  
She is high in the Heaven of Heavens,  
she is face to face with her Lord,

## XXII

And He sees not her like anywhere in  
this pitiless world of ours!  
I have told you my tale. Get you gone.  
I am dressing her grave with  
flowers.

## KAPIOLANI

Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived  
in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of this  
century. She won the cause of Christianity by  
openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess  
Peelè. In spite of their threats of vengeance she  
ascended the volcano Mauna-Loa, then clambered  
down over a bank of cinders 400 feet high to the  
great lake of fire (nine miles round)—Kilauëä—  
the home and haunt of the goddess, and flung  
into the boiling lava the consecrated berries  
which it was sacrilege for a woman to handle.

## I

WHEN from the terrors of Nature a  
people have fashion'd and worship  
a Spirit of Evil,  
Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who  
calls to them  
'Set yourselves free!'

## II

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol  
a valorous weapon in olden  
England!  
Great and greater, and greatest of women,  
island heroine, Kapiolani  
Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries,  
and dared the Goddess, and freed  
the people  
Of Hawa-i-ee!

## III

A people believing that Peelè the Goddess  
would wallow in fiery riot and  
revel  
On Kilauëä,  
Dance in a fountain of flame with her  
devils, or shake with her thunders  
and shatter her island,  
Rolling her anger  
Thro' blasted valley and flaring forest  
in blood-red cataracts down to  
the sea!

## IV

Long as the lava-light  
Glares from the lava-lake  
Dazing the starlight,

Long as the silvery vapour in daylight  
Over the mountain  
Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be  
mingled with either on Hawa-i-ee.

## V

What said her Priesthood?  
'Woe to this island if ever a woman  
should handle or gather the berries  
of Peelè !

Accurséd were she !

And woe to this island if ever a woman  
should climb to the dwelling of  
Peelè the Goddess !

Accurséd were she !'

## VI

One from the Sunrise  
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before  
him

Vanish'd shadow-like

Gods and Goddesses,

None but the terrible Peelè remaining as  
Kapiolani ascended her mountain,

Baffled her priesthood,

Broke the Taboo,

Dipt to the crater,

Call'd on the Power adored by the  
Christian, and crying 'I dare her,  
let Peelè avenge herself' !

Into the flame-billow dash'd the berries,  
and drove the demon from Hawa-  
i-ee.

## THE DAWN

"You are but children."

*Egyptian Priest to Solon.*

## I

RED of the Dawn !

Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms  
of a Moloch of Tyre,

Man with his brotherless dinner on  
man in the tropical wood,

Priests in the name of the Lord passing  
souls thro' fire to the fire,

- Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey  
that float upon human blood !

## II

Red of the Dawn !

Godless fury of peoples, and Christless  
frolic of kings,

And the bolt of war dashing down  
upon cities and blazing farms,

For Babylon was a child new-born,  
and Rome was a babe in arms,

And London and Paris and all the rest  
are as yet but in leading-strings.

## III

Dawn not Day,

While scandal is mouthing a bloodless  
name at *her* cannibal feast,

And rake-ruin'd bodies and souls go  
down in a common wreck,

And the press of a thousand cities is  
prized for it smells of the beast,

Or easily violates virgin Truth for a  
coin or a cheque.

## IV

Dawn not Day !

Is it Shame, so few should have climb'd  
from the dens in the level below,

Men, with a heart and a soul, no  
slaves of a four-footed will ?

But if twenty million of summers are  
stored in the sunlight still,

We are far from the noon of man, there  
is time for the race to grow.

## V

Red of the Dawn !

Is it turning a fainter red ? so be it, but  
when shall we lay

The Ghost of the Brute that is walking  
and haunting us yet, and be free ?

In a hundred, a thousand winters ?  
Ah, what will *our* children be,

The men of a hundred thousand, a  
million summers away ?

## THE MAKING OF MAN

WHERE is one that, born of woman,  
altogether can escape

From the lower world within him, moods  
of tiger, or of ape ?

Man as yet is being made, and ere the  
crowning Age of ages,  
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch  
him into shape ?

All about him shadow still, but, while  
the races flower and fade,  
Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly  
gaining on the shade,

Till the peoples all are one, and all  
their voices blend in choric  
Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finish'd.  
Man is made.'

### THE DREAMER

ON a midnight in midwinter when all  
but the winds were dead,  
'The meek shall inherit the earth' was  
a Scripture that rang thro' his  
head,

Till he dream'd that a Voice of the Earth  
went wailing past him and said :

'I am losing the light of my Youth  
And the Vision that led me of old,  
And I clash with an iron Truth,  
When I make for an Age of gold,  
And I would that my race were run,  
For teeming with liars, and madmen,  
and knaves,

And wearied of Autocrats, Anarchs,  
and Slaves,

And darken'd with doubts of a Faith  
that saves,

And crimson with battles, and hollow  
with graves,

To the wail of my winds, and the  
moan of my waves

I whirl, and I follow the Sun.'

Was it only the wind of the Night shrill-  
ing out Desolation and wrong  
Thro' a dream of the dark? Yet he  
thought that he answer'd her wail  
with a song—

Moaning your losses, O Earth,  
Heart-weary and overdone !

But all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun !

He is racing from heaven to heaven  
And less will be lost than won,  
For all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun !

The Reign of the Meek upon earth,  
O weary one, has it begun ?  
But all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun !

For moans will have grown sphere-  
music

Or ever your race be run !  
And all's well that ends well,  
Whirl, and follow the Sun !

### MECHANOPHILUS

(In the time of the first railways.)

Now first we stand and understand,  
And sunder false from true,  
And handle boldly with the hand,  
And see and shape and do.

Dash back that ocean with a pier,  
Strow yonder mountain flat,  
A railway there, a tunnel here,  
Mix me this Zone with that !

Bring me my horse—my horse ? my wings  
That I may soar the sky,  
For Thought into the outward springs,  
I find her with the eye.

O will she, moonlike, sway the main,  
And bring or chase the storm,  
Who was a shadow in the brain,  
And is a living form ?

Far as the Future vaults her skies,  
From this my vantage ground  
To those still-working energies  
I spy nor term nor bound.

As we surpass our fathers' skill,  
Our sons will shame our own ;  
A thousand things are hidden still  
And not a hundred known.



And had some prophet spoken true  
 Of all we shall achieve,  
 The wonders were so wildly new,  
 That no man would believe.

Meanwhile, my brothers, work, and wield  
 The forces of to-day,  
 And plow the Present like a field,  
 And garner all you may!

You, what the cultured surface grows,  
 Dispense with careful hands:  
 Deep under deep for ever goes,  
 Heaven over heaven expands.

### RIFLEMEN FORM!

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,  
 Storm in the South that darkens the day!  
 Storm of battle and thunder of war!  
 Well if it do not roll our way.  
 Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
 Ready, be ready against the storm!  
 Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns,  
 Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!  
 Are figs of thistles? or grapes of thorns?  
 How can a despot feel with the Free?  
 Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
 Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
 Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!  
 Look to your butts, and take good aims!  
 Better a rotten borough or so  
 Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames!  
 Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!  
 Ready, be ready against the storm!  
 Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Form, be ready to do or die!  
 Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's!  
 True we have got—*such* a faithful ally  
 That only the Devil can tell what he  
 means.

Form, Form, Riflemen Form!  
 Ready, be ready to meet the storm!  
 Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have been asked to republish this old poem, which was first published in 'The Times,' May 9, 1859, before the Volunteer movement began.

### THE TOURNEY

RALPH would fight in Edith's sight,  
 For Ralph was Edith's lover,  
 Ralph went down like a fire to the fight,  
 Struck to the left and struck to the right,  
 Roll'd them over and over.  
 'Gallant Sir Ralph,' said the king.

Casques were crack'd and hauberks hack'd,  
 Lances snap in sunder,  
 Rang the stroke, and sprang the blood,  
 Knights were thwack'd and riven, and  
 hew'd

Like broad oaks with thunder.  
 'O what an arm,' said the king.

Edith bow'd her stately head,  
 Saw them lie confounded,  
 Edith Montfort bow'd her head,  
 Crown'd her knight's, and flush'd as red  
 As poppies when she crown'd it.  
 'Take her Sir Ralph,' said the king.

### THE WANDERER

THE gleam of household sunshine ends,  
 And here no longer can I rest;  
 Farewell!—You will not speak, my  
 friends,  
 Unfriendly of your parted guest.

O well for him that finds a friend,  
 Or makes a friend where'er he come,  
 And loves the world from end to end,  
 And wanders on from home to home!

O happy he, and fit to live,  
 On whom a happy home has power  
 To make him trust his life, and give  
 His fealty to the halcyon hour!

I count you kind, I hold you true;  
 But what may follow who can tell?  
 Give me a hand—and you—and you—  
 And deem me grateful, and farewell!

## POETS AND CRITICS

THIS thing, that thing is the rage, .  
 Helter-skelter runs the age ;  
 Minds on this round earth of ours  
 Vary like the leaves and flowers,  
 Fashion'd after certain laws ;  
 Sing thou low or loud or sweet,  
 All at all points thou canst not meet,  
 Some will pass and some will pause.

What is true at last will tell :  
 Few at first will place thee well ;  
 Some too low would have thee shine,  
 Some too high—no fault of thine—  
 Hold thine own, and work thy will !  
 Year will graze the heel of year,  
 But seldom comes the poet here,  
 And the Critic's rarer still.

A VOICE SPAKE OUT OF  
THE SKIES

A VOICE spake out of the skies  
 To a just man and a wise—  
 'The world and all within it  
 Will only last a minute !'  
 And a beggar began to cry  
 'Food, food or I die' !  
 Is it worth his while to eat,  
 Or mine to give him meat,  
 If the world and all within it  
 Were nothing the next minute ?

## DOUBT AND PRAYER

THO' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy  
 rod,  
 Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain  
 'Alas !'  
 From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass  
 By that same path our true forefathers  
 trod ;  
 And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod  
 Draw from my death Thy living flower  
 and grass,  
 Before I learn that Love, which is, and  
 was

My Father, and my Brother, and my  
 God !  
 Steel me with patience ! soften me with  
 grief !  
 Let blow the trumpet strongly while I  
 pray,  
 Till this embattled wall of unbelief  
 My prison, not my fortress, fall away !  
 Then, if Thou willest, let my day be  
 brief,  
 So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the  
 day.

## FAITH

## I

DOUBT no longer that the Highest is the  
 wisest and the best,  
 Let not all that saddens Nature blight  
 thy hope or break thy rest,  
 Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the  
 shipwreck, or the rolling  
 Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or  
 the famine, or the pest !

## II

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower  
 than the heart's desire !  
 Thro' the gates that bar the distance  
 comes a gleam of what is higher.  
 Wait till Death has flung them open,  
 when the man will make the Maker  
 Dark no more with human hatreds in the  
 glare of deathless fire !

## THE SILENT VOICES

WHEN the dumb Hour, clothed in black,  
 Brings the Dreams about my bed.  
 Call me not so often back,  
 Silent Voices of the dead,  
 Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
 And the sunlight that is gone !  
 Call me rather, silent voices,  
 Forward to the starry track  
 Glimmering up the heights beyond me,  
 On, and always on !

## GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

## I

WILL my tiny spark of being wholly  
 vanish in your deeps and heights?  
 Must my day be dark by reason, O ye  
 Heavens, of your boundless nights,  
 Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and  
 your fiery clash of meteorites?

## II

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the  
 limit of thy human state,  
 Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that  
 Power which alone is great,  
 Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor  
 the silent Opener of the Gate.'

THE DEATH OF THE DUKE  
 OF CLARENCE AND AVON-  
 DALE

## To the Mourners

THE bridal garland falls upon the bier,  
 The shadow of a crown, that o'er him  
 hung,

Has vanish'd in the shadow cast by  
 Death.

So princely, tender, truthful, reverent,  
 pure—

Mourn! That a world-wide Empire  
 mourns with you,

That all the Thrones are clouded by  
 your loss,

Were slender solace. Yet be comforted;  
 For if this earth be ruled by Perfect  
 Love,

Then, after his brief range of blameless  
 days,

The toll of funeral in an Angel ear  
 Sounds happier than the merriest mar-  
 riage-bell.

The face of Death is toward the Sun  
 of Life,

His shadow darkens earth: his truer  
 name

Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the  
 roll

And march of that Eternal Harmony  
 Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly  
 heard

Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in  
 hope!

## SONGS FROM THE PLAYS.

### FROM 'QUEEN MARY.'

SHAME upon you, Robin,  
Shame upon you now !  
Kiss me would you ? with my hands  
Milking the cow ?  
Daisies grow again,  
Kingcups blow again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow.

Robin came behind me,  
Kiss'd me well I vow ;  
Cuff him could I ? with my hands  
Milking the cow ?  
Swallows fly again,  
Cuckoos cry again,  
And you came and kiss'd me milking the  
cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,  
Come and kiss me now ;  
Help it can I ? with my hands  
Milking the cow ?  
Ringdoves coo again,  
All things woo again.  
Come behind and kiss me milking the  
cow !

HAPLESS doom of woman happy in be-  
trothing !  
Beauty passes like a breath and love is  
lost in loathing :  
Low, my lute ; speak low, my lute, but  
say the world is nothing—  
Low, lute, low !  
Love will hover round the flowers when  
they first awaken ;

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be  
overtaken ;  
Low, my lute ! oh low, my lute ! we  
fade and are forsaken—  
Low, dear lute, low !

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### FROM 'HAROLD.'

Two young lovers in winter weather,  
None to guide them,  
Walk'd at night on the misty heather ;  
Night, as black as a raven's feather ;  
Both were lost and found together,  
None beside them.  
Lost, lost, the light of day,  
'I am beside thee.'  
Lost, lost, we have lost the way.  
'Love, I will guide thee.'  
Whither, O whither ? into the river,  
Where we two may be lost together,  
And lost for ever ? 'Oh ! never, oh !  
never,  
Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

---

### FROM 'BECKET.'

OVER ! the sweet summer closes,  
The reign of the roses is done ;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And over and gone with the sun.  
Over ! the sweet summer closes,  
And never a flower at the close ;  
Over and gone with the roses,  
And winter again and the snows.

## DUET.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear  
in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it  
hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the  
voice of the deep from the strand,  
One coming up with a song in the  
flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming  
up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a  
life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that  
can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little  
isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him  
reign in it—he, it is he,  
Love that is born of the deep coming  
up with the sun from the sea.

BABBLE in bower  
Under the rose!  
Bee mustn't buzz,  
Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,  
Nobody near!  
Grasshopper, grasshopper,  
Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,  
Tit on the tree!  
Bird mustn't tell,  
Whoop—he can see.

RAINBOW, stay,  
Gleam upon gloom,  
Bright as my dream,  
Rainbow, stay!  
But it passes away,  
Gloom upon gleam,  
Dark as my doom—  
O rainbow stay.

## FROM 'THE CUP.'

MOON on the field and the foam,  
Moon on the waste and the wold,  
Moon bring him home, bring him home  
Safe from the dark and the cold,  
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,  
Home with the flock to the fold—  
Safe from the wolf to the fold.

ARTEMIS, Artemis, hear us, O Mother,  
hear us, and bless us!  
Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to  
the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!  
Hear thy people who praise thee! O help  
us from all that oppress us!  
Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O  
yield them all their desire!

## FROM 'THE FALCON.'

'DEAD mountain flowers, dead mountain-  
meadow flowers,  
Dearer than when you made your moun-  
tain gay,  
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,  
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of  
May,  
To me, tho' all your bloom has died  
away,  
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow  
flowers.

O mountain flowers!  
Dead flowers!

## FROM 'THE PROMISE OF MAY.'

THE town lay still in the low sun-light,  
The hen cluckt late by the white farm  
gate,  
The maid to her dairy came in from the  
cow,  
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,  
The blossom had open'd on every bough;  
O joy for the promise of May, of May,  
O joy for the promise of May.

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,  
 And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,  
 And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese ;  
 And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,  
 And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees ;  
 O grief for the promise of May, of May,  
 O grief for the promise of May.

---

WHAT did ye do, and what did ye saäy,  
 Wi' the wild white rose, an' the wood-bine sa gaäy,  
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—  
 What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
 When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin' o' you,  
 And you an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,  
 At the end of the daäy,  
 For the last loäd hoäm ?

---

What did we do, and what did we saäy,  
 Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,  
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—  
 Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,  
 What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,  
 When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,  
 At the end of the daäy,  
 For the last loäd hoäm ?

---

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,  
 Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,  
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue ?  
 Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to you ;  
 For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,  
 Till the end of the daäy  
 And the last loäd hoäm.

---

GEE oop ! whoä ! GEE oop ! whoä !  
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä  
 Thruf slush an' squad  
 When roäds was bad,  
 But hallus ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,  
 Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as mysen  
 That beer be as good fur 'erses as men.  
 GEE oop ! whoä ! GEE oop ! whoä !  
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

---

O MAN, forgive thy mortal foe,  
 Nor ever strike him blow for blow ;  
 For all the souls on earth that live  
 To be forgiven must forgive.  
 Forgive him seventy times and seven ;  
 For all the blessed souls in Heaven  
 Are both forgivers and forgiven.

---

O HAPPY lark, that warblest high  
 Above thy lowly nest,  
 O brook, that brawlest merrily by  
 Thro' fields that once were blest,  
 O tower spiring to the sky,  
 O graves in daisies drest,  
 O Love and Life, how weary am I,  
 And how I long for rest.

---

#### FROM 'THE FORESTERS.'

THE warrior Earl of Allendale,  
 He loved the Lady Anne ;  
 The lady loved the master well,  
 The maid she loved the man.

All in the castle garden,  
 Or ever the day began,  
 The lady gave a rose to the Earl,  
 The maid a rose to the man.



'I go to fight in Scotland  
With many a savage clan ;'  
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,  
The maid her hand to the man.

'Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl !'  
And ever a tear down ran.  
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,  
And the maid a kiss to the man.

LOVE flew in at the window  
As Wealth walk'd in at the door.  
'You have come for you saw Wealth  
coming,' said I.  
But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet  
little cry,  
I'll cleave to you rich or poor.

Wealth dropt out of the window,  
Poverty crept thro' the door.  
'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,'  
said I,  
But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me  
the lie,  
I cling to you all the more.

#### DRINKING SONG.

LONG live Richard,  
Robin and Richard !  
Long live Richard !  
Down with John !  
Drink to the Lion-heart  
Every one !  
Pledge the Plantagenet,  
Him that is gone.  
Who knows whither ?  
God's good Angel  
Help him back hither,  
And down with John !  
Long live Robin,  
Robin and Richard !  
Long live Robin,  
And down with John !

To sleep ! to sleep ! The long bright  
day is done,  
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.  
To sleep ! to sleep !  
Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the  
day ;  
Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade  
away.  
To sleep ! to sleep !  
Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past  
be past !  
Sleep, happy soul ! all life will sleep at  
last.  
To sleep ! to sleep !

THERE is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no hearts like English hearts  
Such hearts of oak as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no men like Englishmen  
So tall and bold as they be.

#### Full Chorus.

And these will strike for England  
And man and maid be free  
To foil and spoil the tyrant  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no wives like English wives  
So fair and chaste as they be.  
There is no land like England  
Where'er the light of day be ;  
There are no maids like English maids  
So beautiful as they be.

#### Full Chorus.

And these shall wed with freemen,  
And all their sons be free,  
To sing the songs of England  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

UP with you, out of the forest and over  
the hills and away,  
And over this Robin Hood's bay !  
Up thro' the light of the seas by the  
moon's long-silvering ray !

To a land where the fay,  
Not an eye to survey,  
In the night, in the day,  
Can have frolic and play.  
Up with you, all of you, out of it ! hear  
and obey.

Man, lying here alone,  
Moody creature,  
Of a nature  
Stronger, sadder than my own,  
Were I human, were I human,  
I could love you like a woman.  
Man, man,  
You shall wed your Marian.  
She is true, and you are true,  
And you love her and she loves you ;  
Both be happy, and adieu for ever and  
for evermore—adieu.

By all the deer that spring  
Thro' wood and lawn and ling,  
When all the leaves are green ;  
By arrow and gray goosewing,  
When horn and echo ring,  
We care so much for a King ;  
We care not much for a Queen—  
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the  
woods.

By all the leaves of spring,  
And all the birds that sing  
When all the leaves are green ;  
By arrow and by bowstring,  
We care so much for a King  
That we would die for a Queen—  
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the  
woods.

THE bee buzz'd up in the heat.  
'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'  
The flower said 'Take it, my dear,  
For now is the spring of the year.  
So come, come !'  
'Hum !'

And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold  
When the flower was wither'd and old.  
'Have you still any honey, my dear ?'  
She said 'It's the fall of the year,  
But come, come !'  
'Hum !'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

Now the King is home again, and never-  
more to roam again,  
Now the King is home again, the King  
will have his own again,  
Home again, home again, and each will  
have his own again,  
All the birds in merry Sherwood sing  
and sing him home again.

## CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,  
And one clear call for me !  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the  
boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark !  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time  
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The flood may bear me far,  
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